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Her First and Last Word

Or, JANET'S CONSTANCY :=: By FLORRY J. BARRINGTON

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CHAPTER I.

THE whole tenement accompanied the casket of Mary McLane. If the carriages had not been provided by charitably inclined people, they would have spent their last dollar, or walked. The McLanes lived on the top floor, east. Barney McLane looked with pathetic pride as he descended the stairs and saw the tenants standing at the open door waiting to fall in line. Barney carried little six-months' old Janet McLane, and was closely followed by his nearest neighbors, Alice and Dick Devonshire, who lived top floor west. But neither Barney nor baby Janet got all the attention as the mournful procession reached the sidewalk.

The curious mob gathered on the street were interested in the ground floor tenants, the last to leave the house; for they were, in a measure, the cause of Mary McLane's death. Hence, after the casket and the flowers had been admired, and poor Barney and the dear baby been pitied, all eyes turned to Bob Merrell and the four orphan girls Mary McLane had risked and lost her life for, by nursing them through diphtheria. They entered the last carriage, and the door was closed with a bang. Then the solemn train moved slowly around the block, where every tradesman had drawn his shade.

The janitor declared the funeral a great success. Baby Janet stood on her father's knee and clawed the solitary mourner's cheek in innocent consolation. But never had Janet been heard to cry as she did when the first spadeful of earth rattled on the box containing all that was left of her mother. It was as though she realized her loss, and the hopelessness of its restoration. Barney did all in his power to pacify her, and finally turned her over to Mrs. Devonshire, who had concealed on her person a bottle of such nourishment as only mothers know how to administer.

But Janet was not to be consoled, and cried, at first loudly, and later very gently, on her father's shoulder until they reached home. The neighbors put Janet to bed, and after preparing supper for Barney, left him to his sorrowful solitude.

The story of Mary McLane's heroic deed in nursing her orphan neighbors, risking her own and baby Janet's life, had reached the newspapers, and many persons of means had come to offer assistance. But Barney wanted no assistance; he wanted his wife. Several motherly women, deprived of their own little ones, offered to adopt Janet. But Barney never wavered.

"No, thank you," was all he could be got to say. "She's all that's left of Mary."

Little Janet never lacked a nurse. The neighbors took turns to care for her while Barney was away at his work as a machinist. But they all agreed that Janet behaved better with Alice Devonshire than any one else. Perhaps because Janet had already found a kindred spirit in eight months' old James Devonshire.

The children's interest in each other began from the time when Alice left them alone and a close contest was kept up to see which would be first to get its toe in its mouth. From then on their interest in their lives was a common one.

The good-looking, happy-go-lucky Barney became thin, pale, and morose. The neighbors respected his mood and stayed away, showing their sympathy in devotion to Janet.

"Barney McLane do be that quare," said Mike, the janitor, to the ground-floor tenant, "that when it's hot he do be wanting the fire all the time, and when it's cauld he don't want fire at all, at all."

"I wish he'd take to drink," said Bob Merrell.

"Or to fighting," declared Mike. "Sure Oi'll go and pick a fight wid him meself, just to rouse him up a bit."

The day came when Barney could stand the pitying glances of his neighbors no longer. Even the shop was unbearable. His mates were either officiously sympathetic or bluntly resentful at the change in him. He appeared one night in the Devonshires' apartment with Janet in his arms. Dick and Alice looked at the pale, set face of their old friend and neighbor.

"What's the matter, Barney?" asked Dick in softened tones. "Where are you going?"

Barney ran his fingers through his hair. "I don't know. Anywhere to get away from this house, the shop, and everything that reminds me of her," he said, sadly.

"Why so pensive!"

The couple exchanged anxious glances.

"Does it feel worse than usual tonight, Barney?" asked Alice, soothingly. "Well now, just wait until I fetch out our James, and you shall see the capers of him and Miss Janet. If it isn't good for sore eyes—well, I leave it to Dick."

Dick laughed affectedly. He didn't like Barney's looks.

"I'm going to cut it," went on Barney. "And I'm going right away."

Alice caught the last words as she was returning to the room.

"What are you going to do about Janet?" she demanded, in consternation.

Barney looked helplessly at the baby, as though it was the first time she had been in his mind.

"She'll have to go where I go," he stammered.

"That's impossible," asserted Alice. "Besides, Janet hates strangers."

After Dick and his wife had used every argument in disfavor of taking Janet along, Barney looked despairingly at Alice. She reached out her hands with motherly cravings welling from her generous heart.

"Give her to me, Barney," she earnestly beseeched.

Barney wavered, and Janet was dropped into the tender arms outstretched to receive her.

"Not for keeps," said Barney, with a dry sob. "Remember, not for keeps." And without another glance at Janet he rushed from the room.

CHAPTER II.

Alice Devonshire turned the last corn fritter. Though it was a delicate operation she managed to keep one eye on her husband, who was performing his evening ablutions at the sink. Dick had greeted her with his usual heartiness, but his voice lacked the carefree tone his wife was accustomed to. Every feeling was sharp in her that day; her intuitions keen to see things drawing near.

"There's trouble," she said to herself, "and he doesn't want me to know."

Alice had the rare gift of tact. She waited until Dick had eaten his supper before trying to gain his confidence. Dick had been dull and anxious for several days, and Alice, familiar with every change in his genial face, noticed it. But with her intuitions working overtime, she could never have predicted what really had happened, namely, that the union had ordered a closed shop, and Dick, with scores of other machinists, had become an unwilling striker. She fought bravely to restrain the tears that would spring to her eyes, and smiled bravely into Dick's earnest face.

"It can't be for long," she hoped. "They must settle it pretty soon?"

Dick shook his head. "It may be a question of weeks, or months," he said. "And I suppose we're quite unprepared for a crisis."

"Well, we've a little to go on with," Alice said. "And if it wasn't for the babies I could go to my old work for a month or two——"

"No, no," interrupted Dick. "That won't do. But I do wish Barney would write."

"What's that to do with it?" Alice asked in alarmed tones. "Janet's not in the way, bless her heart."

Dick looked indulgently at his affectionate little wife. "I was thinking," he said, lowering his voice in consideration of the thin walls, "that if we move to Pittsburgh, where I'm not known, I could go to work right away. But I'd like Barney to know where the baby is."

"We can leave our address with the Merrells," Alice said.

Dick looked perturbed.

"We can't do that very well," he said. "I might have to take another name, otherwise the union will find me out."

"Isn't that dishonest, Dick?" she faltered.

"Maybe, my girl," said Dick defiantly. "But it's more dishonest to stay here and starve my wife and baby than to earn a living for them in another city under another name."

Alice has always gloried in her husband's integrity.

"Forgive me, dear," she said softly. "You always know best. We'll go as soon as you like and take Janet with us. As soon as we can we'll notify Barney. Strange he doesn't write. Something must have happened to him."

When Barney sold out his little home, he gave the Devonshires half the proceeds for Janet. The rest he put in his pocket, resolved to go as far from home as that amount would take him. Barney did not get many hundred miles on the road to Anywhere before his journey was checked by a long and severe illness. In fact, it was fever that Alice saw in his eyes when he so strangely dropped Janet in her arms.

Barney should have been put to bed that night instead of racing across the city in a blinding snowstorm to get the next train for Anywhere. In the weeks that followed Barney would have prayed for death, only the face of baby Janet was always in his mind. The thought of her made him battle with disease. His splendid constitution and wholesome habits saved his life, but the weeks stretched into months before Barney climbed once more the tenement stairs to the top floor west.

A stranger opened the door, and Barney concealed his surprise as best he could. He asked for Mrs. Devonshire. The new occupant had not heard the name of the former tenant—she had moved in only a month before. He sought the janitor, who scarcely recognized Barney in his weakened condition.

"Sure," said Mike, "they moved to Pittsburgh. I haven't just exactly the address, but I guess the Merrells on the ground floor have it."

The Merrell orphans had just come in from school, but they could not tell where the top floor had moved to. Barney waited for Bob Merrell.

Bob greeted Barney warmly. It was more than a neighborly handshake he gave his old friend. He confirmed Mike's statement that Dick had moved to Pittsburgh. He had heard from them once. They had sent an address where a letter would always reach them, and it was to be given to Barney on his return. But all Bob Merrell's search failed to produce the letter. It was no use—the letter was lost.

Barney hung around for days hoping that Bob or the children would find the letter. But all in vain. Finally he started to search for Janet, with no guide except the knowledge that the Devonshires were in Pittsburgh. Arriving in the smoke-begrimed city, Barney investigated every machine shop, where they refused information. He stood at the door and scanned the faces of the men coming out at five o'clock—but to no purpose. Dick had disappeared, none knew whither. Barney returned to the tenement. Dick had not been heard from nor had the letter been found. He had to give it up.

Barney had stood bravely to every blow fate had handed out to him, but the loss of Janet was the last straw. That night, for the first time in many a day, he entered a saloon. There were several hilarious sailors standing near the bar, for the place was near the river. Barney ordered a drink and moodily scanned the headlines of an evening paper lying near.

After a brief glance at the newcomer the sailors renewed their jollity. He soon learned that they intended to remain ashore. Their ship was going to sail in a few hours, but they were not going to work for duty. Barney pored on the newspaper and looked closely at the shipping news. He saw that a Red "D" line steamer for South America was the next to sail. The loud talk of the men confirmed his belief that they were from that boat.

Barney finished his drink, and a very casual observer could have seen a purpose in his eye, in his very walk, as he hurried from the place. In a few minutes he stood at the foot of the pier and surveyed the big steamer. A man brushed past him and hurried up the gangplank. Barney followed closely.

The man, who happened to be the boatswain, turned quickly and demanded to know his business, as no strangers were allowed on board at that hour of the night. Barney told the man what he was there for, and was informed that there were no vacancies. The crew was complete, but the boatswain referred him to the officer whose business it was to engage extra men.

Without telling what he had overheard in the saloon, Barney talked with the officer, but he received no encouragement, and was turning away when the boatswain called him.

"If you want to hang around until sailing time," the sailor said, "there might be a chance to go with us. A lot of fellows are on leave, and they don't always get back on time."

Barney thanked the man for the hint and waited. Fifteen minutes before the boat drew anchor Barney got a cue from the friendly boatswain. He went up the gangplank with a bound, and that was the last that New York saw of Barney McLane for many a day.

CHAPTER III.

The joviality in Dick Devonshire was indescribable, and time had dealt lovingly with Alice. She was just as sweet of face and round of form as on that night, seventeen years before, when she begged Barney McLane to give her Janet. They were no longer to be found in a tenement, or in Pittsburgh, but in a cozy apartment on the upper West Side. Dick, through conscientious effort, was now foreman in a large concern where he drew a comfortable salary.

James, a handsome youth, the apple of his mother's eye, was climbing steadily in the business he had adopted—motor construction. And Janet. Who but a poet could describe her loveliness? Sweet, gentle little Janet, an emblem of springtime, dainty and blonde, with a flowerlike face and exquisite eyes of melting blue. Dick and Alice idolized her, and she returned their affection with all the ardor of her loving nature.

It was the supper hour, and Dick was reading scraps of news from the papers while Alice put the finishing touches to the table, at the same time glancing at the clock.

"The children are late tonight," she said, at last. "I wonder what's keeping them?"

"Oh, they'll be along soon," Dick assured her. "Perhaps there's a blockade or some other delay."

Meanwhile, James, as usual, hurried from his work to wait for Janet in the lobby of the building where she was employed as a stenographer. He stood on his regular corner and watched the big elevator empty its passengers, and then shoot back up the shaft for the next load. This went on for a long time, until the crowd thinned, and presently only one or two people came down on each trip.

James looked at his watch. It was half an hour past Janet's usual time. He became anxious, but decided to wait another five minutes. Then he approached the elevator man to inquire whether Janet had gone home. She had not, so James, waited, a nameless dread at his heart. Presently she came, accompanied by a big black-eyed, aggressive looking man, who stared boldly into the shy flushed face of the girl. He led her toward the door with a proprietary air, causing the watching James feverish anxiety. But he was a brave lad, and he stepped out of his remote waiting place, and raised his hat gallantly.

"Oh," exclaimed Janet, in relieved tones, "I was afraid you had gone!" Her eyes told him the relief his presence gave her.

The older man scowled wickedly at the young whippersnapper who had presumed to interrupt his plans, but he beamed affably on Janet as he courteously bade her good night.

"Who is that man, Janet, and why are you so late?" asked James, his voice trembling with emotion.

Janet was not less agitated.

"He's Frederick Brownlow, a very rich man, and a loser in some enterprises which my employer has gone into lately, and which have compelled him to take a trip abroad. The reason I'm so late is that the office is to be closed. There were lots of things to do. I wrote several letters for Mr. Brownlow. I'm glad I shall never go to that office again," she said, indignantly.

"So am I," answered James, quietly. "I wanted to punch that Brownlow fellow's head," he added.

Janet smiled lovingly into the impulsive boyish face, then she slipped her little hand in his arm, which was very comforting.

"We'd better take a car tonight and get home quickly," she suggested. "Mummy and daddy will be worrying about us."

Dick and Alice were anxious, for the children had never been so late before. But they managed to conceal their anxieties from each other. Later when the young people came in, both were able to control their feelings of relief, and listened to Janet's story.

"So Mavourneen has joined the noble army of the unemployed," joked Dick. Everybody laughed except James to whom Janet's work was no joke.

He longed with all the chivalry in his manly heart for the time when he would be able to marry Janet and provide for her, and choke off the black-eyed villain who dared to leer at his treasure.

It was a sore grief to the boy that Janet would start out the next morning to look for a position among strangers. He knew it was useless to try to persuade her not to. They had gone over the ground before, and Janet had shown a determination to earn her own support. She was so unconscious of her peerless loveliness, at first James thought it was because he loved her so devotedly that he saw so much beauty and grace of mind in his playfellow.

He began to study other girls in real life and in pictures. Nowhere did he see such perfection of beauty and unaffectedness as was found in Janet. The most marvelous part of it was, she loved him. She had told him so a score of times. To think that millionaires were laying fortunes at the feet of girls who were not half as beautiful as Janet.

With such thoughts as these it was no wonder James dreaded to let the girl out of his sight. That night he dreamed of black-eyed villains, and Janet, by a strange coincidence, dreamed that she was pursued by a bear. James came to the rescue. After he had shot the animal it took on the features of Brownlow. She awoke in a terrible fright, fancying that she heard the cry of murder.

CHAPTER IV.

"It's a strange thing, Alice," said Dick Devonshire, looking up from his paper, "but every time I pick up a newspaper lately there's a certain name flies up and hits me in the face."

Alice knew intuitively what name he referred to, but she looked up inquiringly.

"Now listen to this," read Dick aloud. "The multimillionaire, Mr. Barnard McLane, who accumulated a fortune in South American mines, will make an attempt to outdo in sumptuousness the entertainment recently given by the Gilderbilts by entertaining tomorrow night a wealthy set of which he is a leader. Mrs. Mavourneen Sherwood the popular hostess, will assist Mr. McLane. It is further announced that the millionaire is spending a fortune on flowers to decorate the great house on Fifth Avenue built by the mining magnate."

Dick threw down the paper.

"Now wouldn't that beat you?" he asked, with mystification.

"It's such a common name, Dick. Still I find myself attracted to it every time," answered Alice, in puzzled tones.

Dick scratched his head thoughtfully. "Has Mavourneen ever spoken of it?" he asked, abruptly.

"Never," answered Alice, in relieved tones. "Perhaps because there was a man in the office where she used to be, by the name of McLane. That helped to make the name appear a common one."

"No doubt that's the answer," argued Dick. "But these doubts and fears have been in my head for over six months. Tell you what I'm going to do, my girl: I'm going to get a peep at Mr. Barnard McLane before many days. I'll follow the papers and see when he's to be at some function, and then watch his house and see him get in his fifty-thousand-dollar motor car."

The fear that it might be their old friend Barney prompted Alice to say, "Don't go," but she refrained. For years she had dreaded that Barney would come and take their darling away. She never knew how Barney had searched and given them up in despair. When they returned from Pittsburgh, they went to the tenement, and learned that the Merrells had moved out of the city and left no address. They were told by Mike, the janitor, that Barney had come to the house shortly after the Devonshires had gone away, and that he had sent him to Merrell for the Pittsburgh address.

The janitor said nothing about the lost letter for the simple reason that he had never heard that it was lost. So Dick and Alice believed very naturally that Barney had deliberately stayed away. If this wealthy Barnard McLane was their old friend, why hadn't he looked for them and his daughter. Alice dismissed him from her mind.

A few evenings later Dick stood under a lamp-post opposite the house of the millionaire on Fifth Avenue. A magnificently equipped machine grunted impatiently at the curbstone. A striped furry animal that might have come out of the African jungle crouched on the front seat, and now and again jabbed the tips of its paws together, for the night was bitterly cold. Dick turned up his coat collar, dug his hands in his pockets, and gritted his teeth determinedly.

"I'll see it through now I've started," he muttered.

To keep himself warm he walked to the end of the block, but the wind came so fiercely around the corner he turned back. Always keeping his eye on the mansion, he strolled in the opposite direction. Here the wind he fancied he had turned his back on, met him again with double force and drove him back to the lamp-post.

Before long, however, the door of the house he was watching opened, and a big broad-shouldered man came out. Dick crossed the street, his cap pulled well over his face, and simultaneously the two men reached the sidewalk. One glance at the millionaire, as the thing from the front seat—which turned out to be a man—scrambled down and opened the door of the car, was enough for Dick.

He turned on his heel, and had nearly reached the corner when the door of the automobile closed with a bang. A second later the machine shot past him, and the millionaire saw the light of the street lamp shining full on the face of the pedestrian.

CHAPTER V.

Dick's feelings found vent in the long walk to his home. Alice had gone to bed, and Dick paced up and down the little diningroom. The first feeling of indignation past, he sat down and tried to recall all he had ever heard or known of Barney McLane. As he did so the angry fire died out of his eyes, and a look of relief spread over the genial face.

"Barney McLane never did a shabby trick in his life," he said, under his breath. At the same time he slapped his hand so loudly on his knee that Alice must have been awakened by the sound. A moment later she appeared in a dressing gown, anxious concern on her face. Dick told his wife of the discovery he had made, and the couple looked long and earnestly into each other's troubled faces.

"It's the hardest duty I've ever been called to perform," Dick said, at last. "If he'd found us 'twould be different. He might think we want to drop the responsibility of Mavourneen——"

There were tears in Dick's voice, and he stopped abruptly. Alice dried her eyes quickly, as she always did at any sign of deep feeling in her husband.

"He can't think that," she declared proudly. "We're in good circumstances, and we brought Janet up so that she is able to earn her living."

"Not that we want her to," interrupted Dick.

"If she'd been our own daughter she wouldn't have worked," Alice resumed. "But we had no right to deprive her of independence. If I'd kept her at home it would have seemed to her like charity. She isn't that kind, and I love her for her self-esteem." Alice gave vent to a fresh flood of tears. She sobbed as though her whole soul was rent in twain.

"Come, come, my girl, this won't do!" said Dick soothingly. "What is it, Alice?"

As soon as she could, Alice controlled herself. "I'm thinking of James," she wailed.

Dick's eyes became round as saucers. "What about him?" he asked, in genuine astonishment.

At first Alice thought her husband was pretending blindness to the state of affairs between the young people. Then she remembered that men are seldom as quick as mothers to see such things. She went over to her husband and threw her arms around his neck.

"Dick," she whispered, "James loves Mavourneen just as you loved me eighteen years ago."

"I love you now just the same as I did then," declared Dick, gallantly. And when the full significance of her words became clear he felt back in his chair with the exclamation: "God bless my soul!"

Before going to bed they agreed that clearly it was their duty to tell Janet of her good fortune. It never occurred to them that Barney would be other than delighted to find his daughter.

The following day Janet wanted to take advantage of her idleness to shop and visit, but Alice, having no heart for either, kept the girl by her side, hating to have her out of her sight for a moment. It had been decided to tell her the news after Dick came home. Janet noticed the change and thought Alice ill.

"What is it, mummy dear?" she asked, solicitiously. "You're not like yourself. You're feverish."

Alice avoided the loving eyes.

"And you are crying, dear," Janet faltered in tender alarm. "Oh, do tell me if anything's the matter."

Alice bowed her head on her dear girl's shoulder, and very for her own

loss and the blow about to fall on her only son.

All that day Dick was wording a speech to be addressed to Janet. Never once did his mind travel from the subject. An employe asked him what was to be done with a shipment of steel girders, and he quite unnerved the man by saying that they were to be exchanged for Persian rugs and, Chippendale furniture. But when the time came all that was left of Dick's speech was:

"Mavourneen, we've got to lose you, and it's breaking our hearts to let you go."

Janet stood between the couple, an arm around each, tears shining in her lovely eyes. "Surely," she said, in caressing tones, "the things we worry about almost never happen. I'm never, never going to leave you."

Dick reverted to his speech, and began picking up the threads. He got as far as exchanging the humble flat for Persian rugs and Chippendale furniture, but Janet smiling through her tears interrupted him.

"My father deserted me when he was poor. Now that he's rich he won't miss me," she said, tensely. "We'll never mention his name again. Forget him as thoroughly as he forgot me."

The couple gazed at the girl and then at each other. Dick's honesty came to the surface.

"We mustn't misjudge him, Mavourneen," he declared, stoutly. "He was always the right sort. 'Twas his good qualities that won for him the love of your mother, who was, rest her soul, the best woman that ever breathed the breath of life. And there's a soft spot in my heart for my old friend, Barney McLane."

CHAPTER VI.

Barnard McLane, sitting in his sumptuously appointed breakfast-room made a picture of good looks, good health, and prosperity. His secretary gathered up some papers, the subject of their consultation, and was preparing to leave the room, when his employer showed a desire for further conference.

Arthur Cleaver was a tall, spare young man with eager eyes and an earnest expression that invariably inspired confidence. Mr. McLane had observed the young man very keenly for months. Ever since he had made his fortune McLane had been searching for such a man.

"Sit down, Cleaver," he said, motioning to a chair. "I want a few words with you. I've watched you pretty closely and you seem to be a man to trust."

Cleaver disciplined his features and sat down again. "Thank you, Mr. McLane," he replied. "I'm glad my services are satisfactory."

McLane was silent a few moments, and the secretary watched him furtively.

"Of course you know," he said suddenly, as all the world does, that I made my fortune in a short time, and like the rest of the world, you know as much about my past life as you've been able to find out—which thanks to there being so little it was soon told and forgotten."

Cleaver showed no resentment, but listened respectfully.

"Of course," the millionaire continued, "the notices of my charities, my presence at big affairs, and society swarming to know me, are all very flattering, and a person in my position very naturally resents any prying into his past. Not that I've anything to be ashamed of." Mr. McLane's face flushed painfully. "But there's an incident in my past that would furnish a dainty morsel for the yellow journals."

"I'm sure it's no reflection on you, sir," boldly declared the secretary.

"Thank you, Cleaver," said McLane, mopping his brow. "After I explain you will see that it's a question of opinion. The journals could be of inestimable value to me just now, if I dared to take them into my confidence. But I know what it would be. They would think I hadn't told everything, and the reporters would be bribing my servants, listening at the keyhole to see if I talk in my sleep; and perhaps disguising themselves as chambermaids." He laughed mirthlessly.

"I hope I shall be able to advise you, Mr. McLane," Cleaver said, concernedly, but without curiosity.

"I've never told a living soul except my partner, Mr. Brownlow, and for reasons of his own he will never tell," resumed the millionaire, in heavy tones. "It's eating out my heart and poisoning my life." McLane buried his face in his hands.

The secretary looked wonderingly at his employer. "What does Mr. Brownlow suggest?" he ventured to ask.

"Mr. Brownlow doesn't sympathize with me in this matter," replied McLane. "He calls it foolish sentimentality."

Cleaver's friendly but respectful interest was getting beyond the control of his features. He looked curiously at his employer. The millionaire was shrewd enough to see that he had the complete sympathy of his secretary, and he told the story that the reader already knows. He told it with such suffering pathos that before he was half finished the young man vowed to himself that he would find the lost daughter if she was on the face of the earth, or die before abandoning the search.

"You see," went on McLane, "how the papers could help me in my search, for they are the best sleuths in the country. But I'm a coward and dread the scandal."

Cleaver had been thinking quickly. As the rich man's secretary he was in a position to know that there was no one to benefit by his lack of relatives, except his partner Brownlow. Cleaver disliked him with a wholesome dislike. "No wonder," thought the young man, "he isn't in sympathy; he has too much to lose. I think before long I'll make a big hole in his inheritance, supposing he outlives my employer."

Cleaver made no extravagant promises, but there was inspiration in his tones when he said: "Don't worry, Mr. McLane, I'll find your daughter before long. I feel it instinctively."

"If you can do it without publicity, I shall be deeply grateful." And then the old Barney in him asserted itself. "But if it has to be proclaimed from the Metropolitan tower we'll do it, boy, rather than not find her."

Cleaver's face flushed with pleasure and pride in his employer. He advised secrecy where Brownlow was concerned. Though Barney showed no disloyalty to his partner, he agreed not to tell him of Cleaver's quest. That same evening Barney saw a familiar face under the lamplight a few doors from his house. Was it an accident, or was it Dick Devonshire spying on his movements. Would his old friend keep his child from him now that he knew him?

Barney was due at a large reception given in honor of some foreign celebrity. He would have absented himself from the gay whirl, but before he knew it the automobile stopped at a large mansion. He pulled himself together as best he could, and was soon mingling with the fashionable crowd, accompanied by his partner, Brownlow.

"I was afraid you had gone."

Barney could not have met a better man just then for making him forget his trouble. He was always on his mettle when Brownlow was around, for it was he who piloted Barney through the shoals and quicksands of society.

This Brownlow had attached himself to Barney on his arrival in South America. It was an easy matter to convince the credulous Barney of his birth, education, and position in business and society, and later, though it was well known that Barney's fortune came with almost the first spadeful of earth, Brownlow proclaimed himself his partner. The fortune was so enormous and Barney so ingenuous, he believed that a partner was necessary.

Brownlow said he had not a relative in the world, and Barney was similarly situated, unless he could find his daughter. So the men agreed that at their death the fortune of each should go to the other. Though Barney never doubted his partner's attachment to himself, his sympathy he knew in the loss of his daughter was lukewarm.

There was no doubt that Barney was popular, not alone for his immense wealth, but that freedom from affection which often goes with its possession. The naturalness of the man appealed more than anything else to the people who had not the courage to be natural, and whose lives were empty existences.

For an hour he listened to the meaningless chatter. The room was overpoweringly hot, the air laden with the perfume of the richest flowers. It seemed to poor Barney that there was something horribly wanton and malignant in the ordering of things. What business had he to be enjoying all this vast wealth and entertainment, while perhaps his daughter was in want. Why should his Mary be condemned to die at twenty-eight without having once tasted the flavor of life? What purpose was there in it? To be sure she had died in a noble cause, but still wasn't it enough to discourage a body from doing a good act? And no one was the better for her death. That look on Dick's face, oh, how it had stabbed him!

Brownlow looked curiously at his companion, as the men smiled a welcome and the women brightened at his coming. Barney was a handsome man, and many a pulse quickened at his touch.

"What's the matter, McLane?" Brownlow asked. "You look as though you had lost your fortune. Brace up, or there'll be some big headliners in the morning papers."

Barney straightened up, and just then his hostess, Mrs. Underwood, met them and scolded them roundly for neglecting her all evening. In the midst of a lively conversation between her and Brownlow, Barney was planning a visit to Mary's grave.

Yes, he would go to the little nook in Greenwood Cemetery. He had not been there since his return to the States.

Then he thought of that day spent at the seashore, just before Mary died, and he remembered her drying her hair on the beach; such long brown hair it was, and it shone like gold in the sunshine. Mrs. Underwood watched him from the corner of her eyes.

"Why so pensive?" she laughed. "I declare, Mr. McLane, you look quite sentimental."

Barney started from his trance. "I'm ashamed to confess it in your presence, Mrs. Underwood," he said "but I'm afraid this room has made me tired."

Mrs. Underwood laughed delightfully. "Your frankness is so refreshing," she declared. "I'm going to forgive you and insist upon Mr. Brownlow taking you home."

Brownlow frowned, but took his orders meekly from the charming widow.

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

A Guest.

How do you do, Mary, dear? I'm so glad you could come. It is an age since we met and we will have a nice long talk. Come right in and take off your things and make yourself at home —Oh, not in the parlor, Bridget hasn't taken the sweeping covers off the furniture. Come right into the nursery—a funny place to ask your guest, but in a cottage one hasn't much choice of rooms; and anyway I believe in taking your friends right into the heart of the family life. Let me take your wrap. What a dream of a gown! But you needn't have dressed up for a quiet home lunch. Oh, you are going on to the Gardners to play bridge? I wonder they didn't ask me, but I can't say I am altogether sorry. They are always so formal that I never feel at home with them. Put your hat up here out of the way of the puppy; he eats everything. Not sit down and let's talk of old times. You'll excuse me if I keep on with my sewing; with three children one can't sit idle a minute, and I don't like to say, do you? Then I wonder if you'd mind taking the bastings out of this frock? Gladys wants to wear it to dancing school this afternoon. Thank you so much, dear; you see I'm making you quite at home.

Here's my blessed baby! Tum to muzzer, pet. Oh, what sticky little fingers. See, Mary, he's quite taken with you. Don't you want to hold him while Bridget sets the table? Be careful that he doesn't soil Gladys' dress. Now tell me all about—Oh, excuse me just a minute while I run up this seam on the machine. If baby won't sit still blow on this harmonica; he adores noise. You see I am making you at home. Luncheon, Bridget? We'll come right away. Have the other children come in? Harold, go and wash your hands and clean those grubby finger nails. Yes, you have time —never mind if the boys are waiting. Mind me, Harold! Oh, well, sit down, then, but shake hands with Miss Mary first.

Come in, Gladys, dear, it's only Miss Mary (she's afraid it is a stranger). Now, Mary, will you sit here, opposite me? I'm going to ask you to help the vegetables. Just a plain home lunch, dear, but I have only Bridget, and I knew you wouldn't want me to get an elaborate meal as though you were company. Where are the chops, Bridget? They didn't come? That wretched butcher? Is this all the cold ham there is? Dear me! Now, Harold, don't make a fuss; you will get enough to eat. Mother isn't hungry. Boys have such appetites. Mary, you can't think! I suppose he'll have to have this big piece.

Is that the doorbell? Stop peeking, Gladys. Can you see who it is? The woman who sells lace? I simply must see her, for sometimes she has real bargains. Excuse me, I won't be gone five minutes. And oh, Mary; would you mind feeding the baby? This potato is already buttered and here is his glass of milk. Don't spill anything on your pretty gown—perhaps Gladys can find you an apron. Where is the child? Take this extra lunch napkin. I won't be long——

I really didn't mean to be gone such an age, but you never in your life saw such bargains in rich crochet! Have you change for $20? No? Then will you lend me a dollar? I haven't quite enough silver. Your purse is with your things? Thanks so much— Oh, Mary, you careless girl! Why did you leave your long gloves hanging over the edge of the table? The puppy has chewed off the thumb. You don't need to come; I've slapped him well. Just stay with the baby till I pay that woman—Now I'll finish my lunch in peace.

Have you had anything to eat? Didn't you pour yourself some tea? I should have thought you would have felt enough at home to do that! I hope it isn't too strong, standing so long. Gracious, it's like lye! Gladys, tell Bridget to bring some hot water. She's out in the yard? Take this pitcher and get some. Don't scald yourself, dearie—yes, Miss Mary will come and help you. The child seems to think you are quite one of the family.

What, it isn't time for you to go! I had no idea it was so late; I must have spent an age with that lace woman. I'm so sorry about your glove, dear. Can't you curl your thumb inside your hand? There, you have got a hole on your gown—what a pity! I don't believe you spread that napkin well over your skirt.

Good-by, dear, it has been so lovely to see you. Do come again when you can spend the whole day. Oh, I hope you'll enjoy your bridge party if you like those formal things. We like things that are nice and homey, don't we, children? Good-by.—Puck.

* * *

A Fearful Dream.

The president of the university had dark circles under his eyes. His cheek was pallid; his lips were trembling; he wore a hunted expression. Every now and then he turned and glanced apprehensively behind him.

"You look ill," said his wife. "What is wrong, dear?"

"Nothing much," he replied. "But—I —I had a fearful dream last night, and I feel this morning as if I—as if I——" He hesitated and stammered. It was evident that his nervous system was shattered.

"What was the dream?" asked the wife.

"I—I—dreamed the trustees required that—that I should—that I should pass the freshman examination for—admission!" sighed the president.

* * *

It's easy to get something for nothing —if you are satisfied with worthless advice.

"Killbrother Pass"

By James C. Threlfall

KEEP straight along the main-traveled road here until you come to a branch that leads away through a low gap in the mountain to the right. That pass will be Killbrother Pass, and—"

"Killbrother Pass!" said I. "What a weird name!"

"I guess you would consider the circumstances by which it got the name more weird. Care to hear them?"

I assured him that I should be glad to hear his story. I had started up to Hansellman Ranch on a summer vacation. My train had been several hours late and the ranch stage having failed to wait for me, I had decided to complete my journey to the ranch on foot.

Not being certain as to the correct route to follow in going to the ranch, I had asked the first man I had happened to meet, and he, with the courtesy common to the mountain country, laid himself ready, not only to give me the required information, but to regale me with the past history of the adjacent country. I told him that I would be only too glad to hear how the pass got its name.

"Well," he began, as he hitched one leg over the horn of his saddle, while I took my seat on a convenient tree-stump, "San Andreas County, as you probably know, is the biggest county in the United States, even now. Thirty years ago it was fully twice as big as it is now.

"It was at that time mostly desert and mountain, and being untouched by so much as a foot of railroad was almost as inaccessible as it was vast, and it was almost out of the question for any one sheriff or set of county officials to administer the law as we nowadays consider the law. As a result, there was a good part of the county without law, a great part of the time.

"Ever been to Hansellman Ranch before?"

I had. I had spent my vacation there the preceding summer, and had fallen in love with the place. Hansellman Ranch is one of those homey little mountain resorts where city people can go and realize the delights of life near to Nature, one of the places where there is a nice little stream babbling down through the center of it, for the romantically inclined to wander along its bank and whisper sweet nothings to each other—one of the places where of evenings the guests gather around an open campfire and tell stories and get acquainted, and where they have a dancehall to dance in, all lit up with pine-knots.

"Well since you have been there," my companion proceeded, "you no doubt noticed how completely it was shut off from the rest of the world by its barrier of mountains. There are only three trails that connect the rest of the world with the ranch, and those three trails are so situated as to make the ranch quite susceptible of guard by its occupants, if need be.

"The place was settled by old Jacob Hansellman shortly after the Civil War, and he was not the sort of man to let the natural advantages the place afforded go unused, for he was of a decidedly crafty, lawless character, and he hadn't made his headquarters on the ranch, which bears his name, very long before the people on the other side of the divide from him began to miss a calf off the free range now and then, or perhaps a colt out of the stable occasionally.

"When the old man died he left six sons, and the unfortunate neighbors weren't long in realizing that the old man hadn't done a circumstance to what the boys were capable of doing. Ralph, the oldest, was the recognized leader of the gang, and he, with the five brothers to aid and abet him, became a scourge to the country for thirty miles around.

"Instead of bothering with stray calves, as in the days of old Jacob, the gang would pick up a small herd now and then, and run them off from beneath the very teeth of the owner, if need be, and over the hill to their ranch, and there at leisure change the brand, although they often dispensed with even that formality. After they had fattened the stock, they would drive them over to Los Angeles and reap a handsome profit from their sale.

"Not that they confined themselves to cattle, though, for that matter. More than one rancher went down to his corral in those days to find his work horses had vanished during the night, or to find his grain-bin stripped of grain. They would ride away armed to the teeth till they found a herd of unprotected or unwatched cattle, round them up, and bring them home in quite as businesslike a way and almost as openly as might a company of peaceful buyers.

"If the sheriff of the county or one of his deputies happened around the ranch, it was an easy matter for the brothers to run any suspicious-looking stock that happened to be on hand away to some safe retreat in the hills.

"Not that the sheriff's office gave the Hansellmans or any of the other lawless characters of the county much attention, however, those days, for there were so many crooks and bandits in the country that they put their own tools in power, and men were elected to office in those days on the "Let well enough alone" platform, just as they are elected nowadays on the Democratic or Republican ticket, and the Hansellmans and their kind grew bolder as time went on, and fattened on their ill-gotten gains.

"And then the people of the county awoke one morning to find that Billie Jordan, newly elected sheriff of the county, took his oath of office seriously, and intended to try and enforce the law. Billie, just because he was a new man to the county, not having been away from the East long enough to have caught on to the San Bernardino ways, could see no reason why the Hansellman family or any other family should ignore the law. So he sent word to Ralph Hansellman in a nicely worded note that he should hold him personally accountable for any further depredations of his clan. Ralph tore the letter that the sheriff had written him to bits.

"Shortly afterward Jordan was told of some peculiarly audacious deed Hansellman had done. Jordan didn't take the general public into his confidence, but

Where the law first came to San Andreas County.

that afternoon he took a couple of dependable deputies and started for the Hansellman stronghold.

"It goes to show how many friends the Hansellmans had, and how well their system of communication worked, that Ralph, who was away out on the Hesperia ridge with three of his brothers on a marauding expedition received notice of the plans of the sheriff three hours from the time the latter had formed them.

"Ralph knew by the direction the sheriff had taken in starting that he aimed to aproach the ranch through this same pass of which I have told you. He sent one of the brothers posthaste to join those left at the ranch, with instructions to waylay the officers of the law at the gap where they could be expected to make their appearance by eight o'clock while he and the two other brothers would complete what business they had on hand and be at home an hour later.

"Well, the three brothers who were in charge of the ranch saddled up their bayuses and got everything in readiness, and about seven o'clock that evening they set out for the pass, taking enough ammunition to interest any one that might come along, not forgetting to take a plentiful supply of whisky to interest themselves while waiting for the sheriff.

"It was a dark night, with not even a wisp of a moon to light the expected caravan on their way, and what stars there were, were covered with a blanket of clouds. The brothers made their stand in a clump of pines that grew at the forks of the road, with their guns primed and their ears expectant to the sound of the approach of any one that might be on the trail that night. The sheriff's party seemed a long time coming.

"Off up the mountainside a bob-cat screamed, and another answered from across the hill. An owl croaked dismally almost into the ear of one of the men, and he would have shot at the thing in a panic of mingled fear and anger had not one of the others brought him to his senses with a rough clutch on the shoulder.

"Once their spirits rose with expectancy as they heard something coming along the road, but it proved to be only a deer, and when its sense of smell warned it of their proximity it turned suddenly and bolted the way it came.

"The brothers drank copiously from their stock of liquor from time to time, and became decidedly mellow. They couldn't see what time it was by their watches, and they didn't dare light matches for fear the flare from even such a small light might give their quarry warning.

"After an interminable lapse of time, however, when they had all about decided that the sheriff's party must have come another route, they heard the swift approach of horse's hoofs coming along the mountain road.

"The ambush party waited until they could see the forms of three riders looming up in the darkness. They did not shoot from cover as they had contemplated, however. Whether a lurking sense of chivalry forbade their taking advantage of the party in that manner, or whether, as was more likely, their potations made them careless and anxious to display their prowess, no one knows; but when the oncoming party was within twenty feet of the ambush, the three waiting men stuck their spurs deep into the sides of their horses, and three abreast went hurtling upon the travelers with a wild warwhoop. They fired, and the approaching three swayed in their saddles.

"Even as the latter lurched unsteadily in their seats, however, their rifles flamed forth, and their bullets bit into the ranks of the attackers, and there were six men almost instantaneously crashed to the ground, and six riderless horses went galloping wildly down the mountainside toward Hansellman Ranch, and the night which was so short a while since full of the mountain peace and quietness was smitten with the despairing groans and cries of wounded and dying men.

"When a half-minute later Sheriff Billie Jordan and his deputies rode briskly up the hillside——"

"I thought you said they were already there and full of the Hansellman buckshot," I interrupted.

"Oh, no!" rejoined my mountain friend. "You are making the same mistake that the waiting Hansellmans made. The approaching party was not the sheriff's at all, but Ralph and his two brothers. The sheriff had been too wise to come that way, but, with difficulty, had made his way, with his two deputies, up the steep mountainside through an almost impenetrable thicket of buckthorn growth.

"He had been waiting at the crossroads, only a few feet from the pine thicket where the ambush of his enemies was formed, a full half-hour before they appeared upon the scene. When the sheriff and his men lit up a couple of pine-knots and started to hunt up the scattered bandits as they lay where their horses had thrown them, it was the first inkling the latter had of their mistake. Four of them never knew of the difference, for the breath of life was extinct when the sheriff found them, and one of the others bled to death before his wound could be stanched.

"Ralph was the only one of the six that lived through the night, and he might better have died with the others, for from remorse at being responsible for the wiping out of his entire family, of whom he was fond, after all, he lost his mind, and died fifteen years afterward in a madhouse.

"There is a wild rosebush grows at the left of the pass, which old residents say has grown up there since the night of the battle, and the roses that are found on the bush are of a dark red hue which no man has ever found in any other part of the mountains. Take a squint at them as you go along.

"Whatever the cause of their growing there, they mark the spot where the Hansellmans shot each other to death in the darkness, and the spot where the law first came to San Andreas County.

"Good-by," said the mountaineer. "Pleased to have met you." And he rode briskly on his way.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Recognized an Omen.

Apropos of the new Bull Moose party, Gifford Pinchot said in Chicago:

"I'll tell you a story that is a good omen. A Bull Moose booster was walking through a railroad station with a Bull Moose banner on his arm when a crowd of Scotch immigrants gathered about him.

"'Fecks, what's that?' said an old lady. 'There's naething like that in Peebles.'

"'That's a moose, ma'am,' said the banner bearer.

"'Hoots!' she cried. 'That beastie a moose?' And then, turning to her friends, she said: 'Laddies, if this is an American moose, what must the rats out here be like!'"

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

The Mother's Compromise.

Champ Clark, during the Baltimore deadlock, told a reporter a compromise story.

"Compromises," he said, "always strike one as unpleasant and unsatisfactory.

"There was once in the Ozarks a boy, who on reaching the age of fifteen, insisted on having a watch to wear. But his father refused him the watch. 'Can't afford no sech foolishness,' he said.

"'Then, by heck, I'll leave home,' said the lad, and he went up to the attic and began to pack his carpet-bag.

"At this point the mother in her desperation came out with a compromise.

"'Willie,' she called up the ladder—'Willie, stay to hum with us, and ye kin wear the clock!'"

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

His Proof.

An Irishman was once serving in a regiment in India. Not liking the climate, he tried to fix up some excuse whereby he would be sent home.

Accordingly he went to the doctor and told him that his eyesight was poor. The doctor looked him over for a while, and then said: "How can you prove to me that your eyesight is poor?"

"Well, doctor, do you see that nail on the wall?"

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"Well, then," replied the man, "I can't."

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Grant's Attire.

A little girl was reading a composition of her own on "Grant's Work in the Civil War." She got on swimmingly until she reached Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. Then she told how Lee wore his sword and handsomely attired in full uniform; "while Grant," she announced, "had on nothing but an old ragged union suit."

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Kept Him Busy.

This is Mrs. Forbes-Robertson Hale's latest suffrage story:

"A negro woman was arguing and arguing with her husband, and when she had finished, he said:

"'Dinah, yo' talk don' effect me no mo' than a flea bite.'

"'Well, niggah,' she answered, 'I'se gawna keep yo' scratchin'.'"

Who Was the Traitor?

A STORY OF FORT DESPAIR By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER XV.

SAYWOOD IS WANTED.

SAYWOOD looked the astonishment he felt, but Miss Jane came into the lull with a short laugh. She grasped her companion's arm and shook her playfully.

"Come now, Serena," she exclaimed, "you need not be afraid of him. He won't bite. You see, sir, she doesn't take kindly to war and disaster, and she thinks your experience has been rather tough. I don't mind. I rather wish I had been along with you, to do my share. Kidnaped you from your own room, did they? Oh! I wish I had been there to help you fight them! Serena is no heroine, but I am. Tell me——"

She poured forth questions as to what had happened, and Saywood was compelled to answer something, but he wanted nothing to do with the subject. As soon as possible he made his escape, leaving the callers to entertain themselves.

Under the flow of Jane's talk Mrs. Elderley had been pushed into the background, and she had been more than willing to remain there. She did not again speak while the Lieutenant was there, but her eyes were more eloquent. She could not seem to look away from him, and always there was something in her expression that seemed to him like fear. He wondered why, and the suggestion of nerves did not satisfy him as an explanation. Later, he happened to fall into talk with Martin, the sergeant of his troop, and subject matter drifted to the pillaging around the fort.

"I've been here through it all," Martin said. "The first real event was when the paymaster was held up in Tiger Tail, which is a bit of a canyon on the Cutlip trail. Corporal Sinnott of B Troop had command of the convoy detail, and as it seemed a very simple matter—the Apache bucks had got quiet as lambs—only six troopers were along with him. We were waiting here for the wagon, rather eager, for every man had a weakness for the paymaster's calls, you see. What happened was a trifle stirring. One of the fellows came packing back this way with his mount all creaming for the hard ride of it. Sinnott had sent him to break the news."

"It was a clean-out, was it?" asked Saywood, interested.

"Complete! Every dollar gone. True, it wasn't so very much, for the paymaster was on the tail end of his rounds and he lost only the pay money for this garrison and Station Thayer, west of here. The gang made a sure thing of it. Corporal Sinnot fought them gallantly, and he has always sworn he knew there were five or six killed of the gang. That took the curse off the thing, and not only did Captain Relford commend him for bravery, but the department general passed it all by. But the waylayers were not caught."

"Sinnott is a lusty-looking fellow."

"Game as they make them. That was the only paymaster raid, but the other cases are legion, or somewhere near it. They have had a rare time around here, though Relford wore us out chasing. I've always felt that if the Commandant had been any other man the lawlessness would have been far worse. Trust Relford to do his level best."

"Do you think the gang will ever be brought to judgment?"

"Hard question, sir. I must say it looks especially bad since you learned that there was nobody in the hills."

"How do you think the desperadoes happen to know just when booty will reward a raid?"

The Sergeant carried a hand to his head and rubbed slowly.

"Do they know?" he asked.

"If not, how do they succeed so well?"

"Well, as to that—see here, sir, I've known men to use their tongues too much, and I hope this will be considered confidential. I've held that we had a telltale among us, a traitor, so to speak; but the last time I suggested that—it was a month ago—Lieutenant Morcratz nearly snapped my head off."

"Why should he?"

"Oh! he goes in strong on the honor of the service, as he calls it. He won't believe there can be a knave among the United States soldiers, so he won't listen to them who think otherwise. That's all, sir."

Saywood was not so sure of it, and after he was alone he was impressed by the chain of little circumstances that centered around Lieutenant Morcratz. He had held the theory that the garrison traitor was above the rang of private, and the lieutenant of C Troop was oddly

Estelle cried out feebly and fell.

opposed to any theory that looked reasonable.

After dinner Mr. Metterson rode away, giving no hint as to his destination, but when, just before dark, he came in, he sought Saywood as soon as convenient.

"I've been in Sunset Valley," he announced.

"Ah! And I take it you have seen something there."

"Not in the sense you mean, but I did see Nat Brief, and he sent a message. It was this: 'I have spotted the man who led that party against us in the hills. I recognized him by his movements in saddle. His name is Gustavus Elderley. I called at his house and he entertained me well, though his wife and sister were at the post on a ride and the entertainment was informal. Elderley did not recognize me, so I got along all right with him. He is the man who helped kill the mail-carrier.' That, Lieutenant Saywood," concluded Metterson, "is what Brief said, though I don't claim to quote his words exactly."

"What more is there?"

"Nothing. I questioned Nat freely, being keenly interested, but he said he had no more information. He had recognized Elderley, and nothing more. Of course he added that he was going hot on the trail. Did the Elderley women come here?"

Saywood's affirmative was absentminded. He recalled the call of the women, and Mrs. Elderley's odd agitation. His previous disinclination to attribute her manner to nervousness grew more pronounced, and he was more than prepared to surmise that Nat had fallen upon an important discovery. If the leader of the gang had been rightly identified, a great step had been taken in unmasking the scourges of Fort Despair.

"Nat," Metterson pursued, "was insistent that you should not come near Sunset Valley. His idea is that work here needs you, and work there needs him, and that he can attend to it better if you do not start the impression that you are investigating the ranchers."

"It shall be as he wishes, though I did want a scout there. Nat will do all that's necessary."

"I am to ride between the two of you," added Metterson, smiling, "and act the part of a curiosity-haunted Englishman, but really to make report to both of you."

The arrangement seemed to be a good one, and it was so settled.

Just before nightfall Corporal Sinnott led his detail back, but his report caused no flurry. He had given his men their fill of work, but at the same point where Saywood lost the trail he, too, had lost it. The Lieutenant, smiled secretly when he knew this. When he was baffled, only lack of time had prevented his invading Sunset Valley and trying to strike something there. He well knew it was the right thing to do, but with Nat Brief in that section he did not make the suggestion.

All day the young man had been trying to speak with Zyra Cheswick, but she did not appear. After dark he went to Relford's door and sent word that he wished to see her, but answer came back that she was too busy and begged to be excused. Saywood went away perplexed. A previous impression was confirmed by the message.

He was now positive that Zyra had taken pains to keep out of his sight. He wondered why? Estelle had been a mystery. But Zyra, open, frank, and friendly—the partner of his adventures—why should she shun him? More than ever, Fort Despair was reeking with mystery.

On reaching his own quarters he found Griffen waiting for him with eagerness in his expression.

"Begging your pardon, sir," he said, "I saw you call there."

Saywood eyed his man, and, convinced that there was no occasion for reproof, he put the impulse aside.

"Well, Griffen, what of it?" he asked

"I thought maybe you wanted to know how Miss Estelle was, sir. Anyways, report says she is sick. That's the talk along officer's row, and every skirted servant is poor-dearing her volubly, but it's gammon. The Captain's miss ain't sick."

"How do you know that?"

"You will think me mighty impolite, but I've been spying—acting the sneak, as you'll look at it. My old mother would wallop me smart if she knew and had me near her, but I've been peeking from behind a winder shade. Those two girls—Estelle and Zyra—are as lively as crickets. Sick abed? Not by a mile! Both have been sticking together like clams, and all around the room. One or both may be nervous—I can't say as to that—but active they are. I thought you might wonder why."

"Illness does not necessarily mean confinement to bed. Is there more?"

"Yes, and that's what has impressed me. Those two girls have had their heads together all the while, talking, talking—solemn as grave-diggers—planning, planning—leastways, what else can it be?"

"Griffen, I know you mean well, but I cannot approve of what you have done——"

"I knew you wouldn't, sir, but if I get discharged for it I shall maintain that what the two misses know would put you right onto the secret of this post. I'm no thick-head, and I can tell when two women have important secrets——"

"But I won't have you spying of them. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir, and I admit I deserve reproof, but—there's the doorbell."

"Go and answer it."

Griffen went, but was soon back.

"Miss Relford's compliments, sir, and she wishes to see you," he announced.

CHAPTER XVI.

A STRANGE STORY.

Saywood left his house in a bewildered frame of mind. Both Estelle and Zyra had shunned him, and so unceremoniously that he had felt hurt and rather annoyed, and now he was summoned to their presence.

Strongly as he disapproved of Griffen's spying, he had been impressed by his report, and it colored his frame of mind as he made his way to the Relford house.

A servant was near the door, and she opened it without the necessity of his ringing. Then she gave him a smile and a little nod.

"The ladies will see you at once, sir," she remarked brightly.

"I am at their service," the Lieutenant replied.

"Miss Relford is so poorly that she will meet you upstairs. Please follow me, sir."

He went; she knocked at a door, there was a responsive word and she opened the door. Estelle and Zyra were there.

Saywood read a good deal with one swift, roving glance. He noted that Zyra was her old, healthy, composed self, but that so much could not be said for the Commandant's daughter. She was very pale, and her face was full of shadows and dark lines that were not natural to her. They were the signs of illness or worry, but she was far calmer than he had expected. Zyra, standing by her friend's chair, gave him a short nod and welcoming smile, but did not speak. Estelle rose, advanced and gave him her hand.

"You are prompt, Mr. Saywood," she said, amicably. "Few answer a request so readily, but I am prepared to believe you are so constituted that military celerity governs all your actions. Thank you for coming. You see, I am not feeling like going out. Pray be seated."

He made some sort of answer and found his way to the chair. Zyra had turned and was busy at something that did not seem to call for attention. Clearly, Estelle was to have everything to herself, and the caller had the uneasy impression that the air was charged with electricity. Something was afoot. He could see no further into the mystery.

Estelle had perfect command of herself. She spoke for several minutes upon inconsequential happenings, but it was only the gradual approach to the real purpose of her summons. She reached that feature finally. Her manner suddenly changed. Nothing of composure was lost, but gravity was over her and her delicate face.

"I will now come to business," she said, "I have sent for you for reasons that will surprise you. In one word, it is to explain the mystery of Fort Despair. I know all, and am about to tell you all."

Saywood heard Zyra move restlessly, but he did not shift his gaze from Estelle. She had given him a deep surprise, and she held his attention.

"Would you," she pursued, "think me the bearer of a guilty secret?"

"Decidedly not!" he declared.

"I will show you. Garrison gossip, which is always very free, has marveled why I never married. I have had reasons, urgent, terrible reasons. Briefly, I long ago met one whom I rashly loved. I was then young—young, and he was older. He has followed me. He has been at this post. More often, he has been near it, but invisible. The man——"

She paused, fumbled at her watch-chain with hands that fluttered with nervousness, seemed on the point of a break-down, and then straightened herself with plain resolution.

"The man," she repeated, "is the same who had been sometimes called Claggitt!"

Saywood gazed at her in bewildered consternation.

"The leader of the outlaws," she added firmly.

"Yes?"

The listener felt that the word was lamentably weak and inadequate, but it required a world of resolution to say even that. He was dumfounded; he was like a beaten, beset, helpless object that floated in the heavens in a driving wind. His judgment was torn up by the roots and whirled away. Power of coherent thought was suspended. The girl who said this was the Commandant's daughter.

"He will lead no more forays," Estelle steadily pursued. "He has met with a sudden, violent death near here, shot, and done with life before his lips could tell—anything! He is represented only by silence!"

"You amaze me, Miss Relford," said Saywood, uneasily.

"It has been a long, wearing battle on my part—a battle to save myself, never to save him. He forfeited all claims upon me, long ago. I have tried only to save my reputation, to prevent people from knowing of my acquaintance with that dreadful man. To do that I have schemed for years, deceived my best friends, even my——"

She hesitated, made a swift, excited gesture, and resumed.

"Even my father. Poor father! For his sake I have plotted against him. I would not have him know of—Claggitt! I'll not speak his real name. Some have suspected there was a traitor in this post. There was one. It was I!"

"You?"

"Claggitt demanded information, threatened to tell of my former infatuation unless I complied. And—and so I gave the information."

She was losing her self-command, and her voice shook pitifully. Her eyes were like those of the hunted. They were fixed upon his own unwaveringly, but hardly in firmness. And Saywood, who, hearing such a confession from a man, would have questioned swiftly, pitilessly, shrank from questioning her in the least degree. His one consuming feeling was that it was cruel to him that he must sit and hear what she told. But pity for her—pity was boundless!

"Claggitt always knew when to strike," she pursued. "Yes, because I told him. Oh! traitress that I was, traitress and Jezebel!" Now she wrung her hands almost frantically.

"The worst was to deceive my father. He was so honorable, so true to the Government interests, so proud of the military service. Yet, he was not young, and my wits were sharp enough to deceive him. I hope to deceive him to the end of his life. He must never know."

"Never!" exclaimed Zyra, from the rear of the room.

"That is why I have called you here, Lieutenant Saywood. Sir, if you have pity in your nature, I beg that you will do nothing further to solve the mystery with your soldiers and your searches. Claggitt will sin no more. He is dead. May I ask that you will end your investigation as completely as he has ended his life?"

"Miss Relford," replied the visitor, finding speech at last, "pray remember that I am only a subordinate here. Whatever Captain Relford orders is my law, but I have no will outside by directions. It is not to me you should appeal——"

"It is to you!" she exclaimed. "I dare not speak to my father; I will not speak to him. He must never know. He will, perhaps, order you, this or that, to hunt for the outlaws. My request of you, yes, my prayer, that if you are sent to do more investigating you will deliberately fail to find anything."

Saywood was silent.

"Will you not promise?" she asked piteously.

He moved restlessly.

"Miss Relford," he responded, "you do not know how painful this is to me. For every sorrow that you have you also have my profoundest sympathy, but—I am a soldier. First and foremost stands my duty to the military service. Heaven knows I wish I had never come to this post——"

"Can you not leave?" she demanded quickly. "Ask to be transferred. Plead injurious climate——"

"Do I look ill?"

"But you can be blind. Yes, you can if you will. Promise!"

Saywood wiped the perspiration that mental misery had sent to his forehead.

"I am a soldier!" he said thickly.

"I am a woman!" she retorted.

They looked at each other, mutually agitated.

"A woman with a reputation," she added, explanatorily.

"Whatever I can do that is in keeping with my official position I will do. Captain Relford is Commandant here. He is your father. His will is paramount. If he holds me within the garrison, keeping my hand off this Claggitt affair, I will stay. If he bids me go—— Miss Relford, your father is the one to whom you should appeal. Nobody else can give you so much of love and sympathy. Go to him! Tell him everything——"

"Never!" she exclaimed. "I will not, I cannot so lower myself. He must not know. You are my one hope. Will you fail me?"

"In sympathy, never! Still, I am a soldier and Captain Relford is my superior officer. Yes, I am a soldier, and duty is imperative."

"But——"

It was long before Estelle abandoned her hope, but she did no more than to travel the same ground over again. She gave no further information, but sought by every argument and plea to change his resolution. On his part sympathy never fell away, but he could not agree to her wishes. He was kindly firm, and the purpose with which she had called him met with no encouragement.

It was only when she seemed utterly exhausted physically that she became silent, and only then that Saywood took his leave. He went with repeated kindness of word and action for her. Going, he sought to have a look from Zyra, silent in the background, but her back was turned.

He left the house and returned to his quarters. He came home in a miserable frame of mind, and he sat a half-hour in bewildered meditation. He was fresh from the greatest surprise of his life. The Commandant's daughter, who looked to be the most fault-free of women, was —he had heard her story. It was a story for pity not for blame, but he could not overcome his amazement. It was not like this he had pictured the mystery of the garrison.

Gradually one feature of the case, long overlooked, began to assume importance. She had said that the so-called "Claggitt" had recently been shot to death near the garrison. He knew of nobody who had met with such an end but the mail-carrier.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAN TO MAN.

Metterson had ordered his horse, the next day, when Saywood came to him. The Englishman had removed his quarters to the Lieutenant's house, and they had eaten breakfast together, but Saywood had since arrived at a decision. He had something to say to his guest.

"You are going to Sunset Valley, and to Nat Brief?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Tell him to try and learn something about the mail-carrier. Say, if you please, that I want to know the dead man's name, whether he has long been in the mail service, whether he has been steadily occupied, and whether his work has taken him on long journeys or only rather near Sunset Valley."

"I'll pass the word to Nat."

"I hope for tidings soon."

"I'll do my part."

Metterson rode away, and the Lieutenant gazed after him unseeingly. He was not wondering so much who the carrier was that had died with the mail-bag clasped to his breast as what was transpiring within the chief house in the row. Ever since day dawned he had been watching, hoping to see either Estelle or Zyra, but they had not appeared.

When he reached his new post he had regarded them as the most pleasant factors in life there, but they had drifted away from him. Perhaps he did not really miss Estelle greatly, for she had never been especially sociable with him, but Zyra had been frank and friendly, and now he could not even have speech with her. She had withdrawn herself from his society, and apparently had forgotten her compact to aid him. Everything seemed to be wrong at Fort Despair.

While he was meditating, Payson, the friendly young lieutenant, came to his side.

"Captain Relford has not sent out many men to hunt for the mail-carrier's slayer," said the subordinate. "Only three trailers, who are to act on their own responsibility, I understand."

"Yes."

"Of course I won't admit that we are to score another failure, but I wish the Commandant would put matters all in your hands. In that case I would be sanguine, but now—— Say, Saywood, I've just been thinking how I lost my first dollar at the hands of that Claggitt gang. It was a bold game. The department general was here, and Relford sent a detailing to give his send-off dignity, I suppose. It was nearing Christmas—maybe you've heard the story?"

"No."

"So all hands made up what they could of spare earnings and planned to give the old folks at home a little surprise. My contribution was fifty dollars, and maybe there was three hundred in all. The cash was bagged and placed in the rear wagon. Claggitt got it."

"How?"

"Cut out that wagon. The thing disappeared in a canyon, slick as butter, and was not found for a month. The money never was. That acclimated me to Claggitt & Co., as I may express it. Fifty dollars out, by Jupiter! I've always blamed Corporal Sinnott for having placed that boodle wagon at the rear."

"An ill-advised place for money in a wild country. Did the General know that whom did you say you blamed?"

"Sinnott. He had charge of the detail."

"Sinnott, eh? Do I remember correctly in saying that he was also in charge when the paymaster was robbed?"

"I believe he was. Yes, sure. Sinnott was the man."

"Hard hit twice."

"He does seem to have been unlucky."

"Was it luck? What sort of a fellow is Sinnott, anyhow?"

"A veteran of the plains in experience, though rather young. Dandy trailer, and all that. Man trusted by Relford, too. You noticed he was the one who went out yesterday to hunt for the murderer of the mail-carrier."

"Popular man, is he?"

"Oh! well, I have no great love for him, so I'm not the man to say. Still, he is rather popular, and trusted, trusted. No offence, to suspect Sinnott."

"No? Well, I was not along when he had his double loss, but if I had been Commandant here I should have asked Sinnott whether he was heedless or guilty."

"Naturally, perhaps. Still, his armor is bullet-proof. Sinnott is surely in line for promotion. Now, there is Sergeant Lodewing. He will never get even honorable mention—excuse me, I'm tattling now."

Payson laughed, and seemed to think the matter talked out. Saywood, more thoughtful, could not at once shake off the influence of the fact that Sinnott was often in command when calamity came.

"Reckon you are grasping at forlorn hopes," suggested Payson.

"Nothing else," Saywood agreed, and, laughing, let it rest.

Each man, his way, and Saywood's steps took him toward his quarters. He did not go in a contented frame of mind. He had the impression that various loose ends of evidence were in his possession, with no encouragement from any source for him to unite them. He was suspicious of Morcratz and Wesley, and now Sinnott was a feature needing explanation.

Had he been allowed a free hand he would have recalled Nat Brief as soon as his work was done in Sunset Valley, and, together with that keen-eyed helper, have subjected the suspected men to constant investigation, but the free hand was lacking.

Estelle stood like a rock in the path, for her weakness was, in a way, greater strength than real power. He had refused to drop investigations, but his heart was not in the work as before. To do anything was to attack her, yet the plotters inside the garrison ought to be cleaned out. Even if the so-called Claggitt was dead, his allies were as undesirable as ever.

He was considering this when, nearing Captain Relford's house, he was startled by screams from that house. They were the outcries of a woman, and he did not hesitate as to his course. He ran in, heard a disturbance upstairs, and hastened that way. Arriving in the hall he saw a group that held his attention, while coarse, angry words were melding with the other sounds.

"You've turned telltale, but two can play at that game. If I tell all I know there will be somebody in this garrison that will——"

The speaker was Wesley, but his words ceased to flow. Confronting him were Estelle and Zyra, and it was the fact that the latter had suddenly brought a revolver to bear upon the orderly that checked his speech. It was clear that she intended no shooting unless forced to it, but the weapon stirred all the ugliness in his nature into action.

"So you would!" he exclaimed. "Feel like silencing a man who can tell too much, do you?"

It was the retort of a bully, and his doubled fists and gleaming eyes suggested that it was well she had the revolver. But somebody else was there. Saywood moved swiftly forward and laid a heavy hand upon Wesley.

"Get out of here, you brute!" he cried, sharply.

Wesley was taken by surprise, and the restraining grasp was made good before he could act, but he had courage equal to his animosity, and he grappled with the Lieutenant. Military rank and discipline were forgotten, and he acted the wrestler at once and tried to trip the officer.

"You're the cause of it all!" he growled, vindictively, "and this is just what I've been craving for. Down you go!"

But Saywood did not go down. He writhed free of the cunning lock the striker tried to humble him with, and the next moment Wesley found himself being hustled toward the stairs. He had another card to play, and from somewhere in his clothing he brought out a knife. It was an ugly weapon, and as Zyra saw its gleam she cried out in terror.

"He will kill you!" she cried. "The knife, Mr. Saywood, the knife!"

Wesley's arm was pinioned, but he wrenched it free and swung the blade up. Then he viciously drove it downward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT NIGHT.

The knife went harmless. Saywood caught the descending arm, checking it in midair, and the blade fell rattling upon the stairs. Then Wesley was unceremoniously hustled toward the door. He struggled during this discomfiture, but, muscular as he was, the force opposed to him was greater and he had to bow to it. Saywood had him at the door when Zyra appeared behind them.

"What will you do with him, Mr. Saywood?" she asked, quickly.

"Place him under arrest," returned the Lieutenant shortly.

"Please don't do that!" the girl implored. "He is not worth it. Let him go, let him go!"

"But he was threatening you and Miss Relford."

"Let that pass. Send him out, but do nothing more. Estelle asks that it be so."

Wesley laughed mockingly.

"You bet they won't harm me!" he declared. "Ask them again, if you don't believe it. I know too much."

"Please, please let him go!" came in Estelle's voice from the head of the stairs.

Saywood felt that there was no help for it, but his blood was up and Wesley was fated to suffer. He faced the man toward the front and kicked him with a foot so ungentle that the victim fell sprawling. What was to be done with him further was for Captain Relford to say. Zyra thrust her hand into the Lieutenant's and pressed hard.

"You are truly a friend in need!" she exclaimed. "You see, Wesley was drunk, and he was abusive. Pardon me, but I fear Estelle will need me. Thank you, thank you, for her and for myself!"

She was kindly and graciously said, but she at once ran up the stairs to rejoin Estelle. The latter did not seem in urgent need of aid, but Zyra took her arm and they disappeared together toward Miss Relford's room.

Saywood let them go without remonstrance, though hardly with satisfaction. He was again deliberately shut out of their confidence and company, and for a moment he was greatly irritated, but he swept the mood away and smiled grimly. If they wanted it so he would try to stand the strain.

Turning he left the house. Brief as the delay had been it had sufficed for

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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Courtnay's Strange Will

Or, A WOMAN'S FAITH :-: By EMMA HOWARD WIGHT

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CHAPTER V.
THE WILL.

THE lawyer smiled, when Andrew Courtnay said, "You will, perhaps, think it a strange will."

"It would not be the first strange will I have drawn," he declared.

"I want the will made at once," continued Courtnay. "Miss Crawford, the trained nurse, and my housekeeper will do for witnesses."

Walsh took a notebook from his pocket.

"Give me an outline of the will. I will then put it in proper form for your signature."

"To my sister, Nina Allan, the sum of $25,000," Courtnay began. "To my nephew, Bruce Allan, the same amount. The residue of my property to be divided equally between my nephew, Walter Courtnay, son of my brother, Oscar Courtnay, deceased, and my adopted daughter, Ruth Weatherby, on condition that they marry within a year from the date of this will."

The lawyer looked up and asked: "Do you know where your nephew, Walter Courtnay, is to be found?"

"I do not," replied Courtnay.

"Then I would advise you to amend this last clause, suggested the lawyer. "It is just possible that I may not be able to locate Walter Courtnay within the year, so it would be impossible in that case to carry out the conditions."

"That is true," admitted Courtnay. "Very well; make the marriage obligatory within a year from the time Walter Courtnay is apprised of the will and its conditions." The lawyer nodded approvingly. "If the marriage does not take place within the specified time," continued Courtnay, "Courtnay Manor and half of the property to my nephew, Bruce Allan, he to take the name of Courtnay. The sum of $50,000 to my adopted daughter, Ruth Weatherby. The remainder of the property to go to the building and equipping of a free library in Chesterton to be known as the Courtnay Library."

He paused. The lawyer finished making his notes and turned toward Courtnay.

"Anything more?" he queried.

Courtnay shook his head.

"That is all," he replied.

George Walsh arose.

"I'll go down to the library and write the will," he said, as he went toward the door.

The dying man turned his head and looked through the window beside the bed out over the bay. The sun, struggling through the clouds, touched with pale gold color the sails dotting the water. Andrew Courtnay's face was calm and peaceful.

The door opened and Ruth entered. The dying man turned toward her, his eyes softening. As he met the distressed look in her eyes, he smiled a little.

"I am not sorry to go, child," he said. "My life has been a failure." He paused, then added, "I have tried to fulfil the trust reposed in me by your dead father."

"You have never allowed me to miss my father," she said. "You have been very, very good to me."

There was silence for a few moments. "You know that I am a rich man, Ruth?" he queried.

"Yes," she replied simply.

"Have you never speculated as to what disposition I would make of my property?"

"No. I have always believed that you would not leave me unprovided for, and beyond that I did not think. I have never had any great desire for money and there are others who have more claim on you than I."

"The claim of blood is not always the strongest," declared Courtnay. "There are times when the claims of affection, of gratitude, are stronger, more binding, more enduring."

He lay heavily on the pillows, and the sweat of exhaustion glistened on his pale brow.

"Kiss me, child," he murmured, faintly. She bent over and kissed him upon the brow.

"I will rest now," he murmured.

He slept fitfully, rousing when the lawyer entered with the will. The witnesses were summoned. With a firm hand, Andrew Courtnay signed his name. It was the last effort of strength. As he finished, the pen slipped from his hand and they laid him back upon the pillow—dead.

CHAPTER VI.
"HIS LAST WISHES."

Ruth, Mrs. Allan, and Bruce Allan were assembled in the library at Courtnay Manor on the morning following the funeral, to hear the will read. The two women, in their somber black gowns, were seated upon a couch. Bruce Allan stood with his back to the fireplace. Mrs. Allan appeared nervous, there was a restrained restlessness about Bruce, Ruth alone was perfectly calm.

The lawyer seated himself at the writing table and unfolded the will with a deliberation that Bruce found particularly exasperating. There was a tense silence, broken, at length, by the well-modulated voice of the lawyer as he began the reading of the will.

As he proceeded, Mrs. Allan stared in amazement, a startled look flashed into Ruth's eyes, and Bruce Allan's face whitened to the lips. As the lawyer finished reading the will, Bruce turned and walked to the window where he stood looking out. Walsh folded the will and glanced up inquiringly.

"What a preposterous will!" exclaimed Mrs. Allan. She looked at the lawyer. He smiled but made no remark. Mrs. Allan turned to Ruth. "To think that Andrew Courtnay would wish you to marry a man you have never even seen, Ruth!"

"Oh, that is an objection that can be done away with," declared the lawyer. "I hope very soon to be able to locate Mr. Walter Courtnay and acquaint him with the contents of his uncle's will."

Mrs. Allan bit her lips nervously and glanced toward her son. He turned and came back. He had recovered his self-control, but he was still very pale.

"What do you imagine was my uncle's object in making so extraordinary a will?" he asked, addressing the lawyer.

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Mr. Courtnay did not state what his object was," he replied.

Bruce turned from him and looked at Ruth. It was a searching, questioning look. Her eyes were lowered, her hands clasped together in her lap, there was a troubled look on her face. Bruce made an involuntary movement toward her, as though to speak, then restrained himself.

"I shall take steps at once to locate Mr. Walter Courtnay," said the lawyer, briskly. Ruth lifted her eyes and gazed at him very steadily. "Of course, the carrying out of the conditions of Mr. Courtnay's will rests entirely with Miss Weatherby," he looked at Ruth and bowed, "and Mr. Walter Courtnay."

Ruth arose.

"I would like to carry out the last wishes of Mr. Courtnay, if it be possible," she said, quietly.

She turned and moved toward the door. Bruce hesitated a moment and then followed her into the hall.

"Ruth, you will not carry out the conditions of that insane will?" he asked, in a low, tense voice.

She paused at the foot of the stairway and, with one hand on the railing, turned and looked at him.

"That does not rest with me alone," she replied, in a low voice.

A bitter, discordant laugh left his lips. "No sane man would refuse to fulfil those conditions, to procure for himself a lovely wife and large fortune," he declared. "What will you do, Ruth? My God! you know I love you and what this means to me. You told Mr. Walsh that you would like to carry out the conditions of the will."

"I would like to do so because such was the last wish of Mr. Courtnay," said Ruth, quietly. "I owe him so much."

"He had no right to impose such a condition upon you, to force you into a marriage with a man you do not love."

"I do not think it was his intention to force me into a marriage with a man I did not love," she asserted, quietly. "I think he knew that I would never marry unless I did love."

"You mean?"

"That Mr. Courtnay wished me to care for his nephew, and hoped that I would learn to do so. I am sure that he thought of my happiness when he made that will," she declared, loyally. "Please do not say any more now, Bruce. I can only tell you this," moved to pity by the look of suffering on his face, "I shall never marry Walter Courtnay nor any other man unless I love him with all my heart, with all my soul."

She turned and went up the stairs. Bruce watched her for a moment, then turned and walked to the fireplace into which he stood gazing with heavy, brooding eyes.

"I might have known that the money would prove no temptation to a woman like Ruth," he murmured to himself. "That she would be influenced by gratitude, a sense of duty. But she declares she will not marry Walter Courtnay unless she loves him." He drew a sharp breath through clenched teeth. "What manner of man is this cousin of mine? Will he be able to win her love? He is a stranger to her, at this moment, he does not even know she exists. I have loved her for fourteen years, as boy and man. And have won in return an affection that is partly gratitude."

He sighed bitterly. He had a very distinct recollection of his cousin, a beautiful gray-eyed child, with chestnut curls. A feeling very like hatred thrilled through him. Was Walter Courtnay destined to rob him not alone of the woman he loved, but of his uncle's wealth also?

CHAPTER VII.
WALTER COURTNAY.

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que entered the office of George Walsh and inquired for the lawyer. He was ushered into the private office. Walsh looked up from his desk, and the next moment started to his feet.

"You are Walter Courthay!" he exclaimed.

The young man smiled and shook hands with the lawyer.

"Yes, I am Walter Courtnay," he replied. "But how did you know me?"

"I knew you at once from your resemblance to your father," Walsh explained. "You are amazingly like him." He glanced the young man over approvingly. "He was one of the handsomest men I ever saw."

Walter Courtnay laughed as he sat down. There could be no question as to his good looks. He had beautiful dark gray eyes, the fine straight nose peculiar to the Courtnays, a well cut mouth, half hidden by a tawny silky mustache, a little lighter than his chestnut-brown hair. He was of athletic build and perfectly groomed.

"Ruth Weatherby will be hard to please if she is not willing to carry out the conditions of the will after she sees this splendid young fellow," the lawyer was thinking, with much satisfaction. "Are you aware that I have been trying to locate you for the past two months, Mr. Courtnay?" he asked.

"I learned it quite by accident a week ago," was the reply. "I happened to pick up and glance over a Baltimore newspaper two months old, and read an account of my Uncle Andrew Courtnay's death and his will. I came to Baltimore almost immediately." As Mr. Walsh looked at him questioningly, he went on to explain, "I live in Ramsay, a town about forty miles from Denver, Colorado. I am cashier in the Second National Bank in Ramsay."

"Is your mother living?" the lawyer inquired.

"No, she has been dead for five years." He paused a moment and then added, "My uncle's will is rather peculiar."

"Well, yes," admitted the lawyer. "But I shouldn't think there were any great difficulties in the way of carrying out the conditions of the will. That is, of course, if you are free. I take it for granted that you are not married."

Walter Courtnay hesitated very slightly before replying: "No, I am not married."

"Then the sooner you go to Courtnay Manor and make the acquaintance of Miss Weatherby the better. You will find her a most charming young woman. Your aunt, Mrs. Allan, and your cousin, Bruce Allan, are at Courtnay Manor with Miss Weatherby."

"My cousin, Bruce Allan, inherits if Miss Weatherby and myself do not marry within the year, I inferred," said Walter Courtnay, musingly. The lawyer nodded. "I was very young when we left Courtnay Manor, and I have only a vague recollection of Bruce Allan."

"Bruce Allan's a rather clever fellow. He's a lawyer and may make his mark some day. Now, when do you think of going down to Courtnay Manor?"

"I thought of going today," replied the young man.

At that moment the door opened and Bruce Allan walked into the office. He paused upon perceiving that the lawyer was not alone.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I did not know you were engaged."

"Come in, Allan," the lawyer smiled. "This is your cousin, Walter Courtnay," he added, as Bruce came forward.

Walter arose and the two young men shook hands. Bruce was a self-controlled fellow, but he gave slightly as his glance swept over the splendid physique and handsome face of his cousin.

"I was not aware that you had succeeded in finding my cousin," he said, turning and addressing the lawyer.

The latter explained, adding: "Mr. Walter Courtnay is going down to Courtnay Manor today."

"I regret I cannot accompany you," said Bruce, turning to his cousin, the restraint he was putting upon himself causing his manner to be constrained and formal. "I came to Baltimore on some business that will detain me for several days."

Walter bowed and arose to depart. After the door closed upon him, there was silence for a moment or so, while the lawyer busied himself with some papers on his desk. He guessed something of how Bruce Allan felt, and wished to give him a little time to recover himself. The sudden meeting with his cousin must have been startling.

"Your cousin's a good-looking fellow," the lawyer remarked at length, turning to Bruce.

"Yes, very good-looking," Bruce replied, mechanically. Then he immediately began to speak of the business which had brought him to Baltimore, and made no further reference to his cousin.

In the meanwhile, Walter Courtnay walked slowly back to his hotel, the Rennert, the same at which his uncle, Andrew Courtnay, had stopped fourteen years before on his way to Courtnay Manor. Upon reaching his room, he began walking restlessly back and forth, his face pale and grave.

"Will that hidden chapter in my life ever come to light?" he murmured. "Or is it buried forever in her grave?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"POOR BRUCE!"

The December day was very cold. Snow was falling, and the waters of the bay matched the leaden hue of the sky. In the drawingroom at Courtnay Manor Ruth sat before a blazing fire. She had been reading, but the book did not interest her, and she had tossed it aside. She was looking up at a life-sized portrait of Oscar Courtnay which hung over the mantel. He was in hunting dress, a rifle over his shoulder, and his hand resting upon the head of a beautiful thoroughbred hunting dog, whose soft brown eyes were uplifted to its master's face with an expression almost human affection. There was a half-smile on the handsome face of the man, a careless grace in his unstudied pose.

The picture had a strange fascination for Ruth. When she was a girl of sixteen, Mrs. Allan had told her one day of Andrew Courtnay's love for the woman his brother had married.

"Was Oscar Courtnay as handsome as his portrait?" the girl asked.

"Oh, yes, quite as handsome," Mrs. Allan replied.

The girl was silent for a moment, then she said, dreamily: "She just couldn't help loving him."

Mrs. Allan laughed. She was amused.

As Ruth sat looking up at the picture, a servant ushered Walter Courtnay into the drawingroom.

"I beg your pardon," he said, coming forward and perceiving Ruth.

She arose, and her eyes fell from the pictured face to the living one that so closely resembled it. She arose slowly, gazing at him.

"Miss Weatherby?" he queried. She bowed. Under her calm exterior, her perfect self-possession, her heart was beating fast, and she knew that the man before her could be no other than Oscar Courtnay's son. "I am Walter Courtnay," he said.

She held out her hand. "I am pleased to welcome you to Courtnay Manor, Mr. Courtnay," she said, very simply and with no touch of self-consciousness.

Walter looked at her admiringly. He was thinking how well poised she was, this queenly-looking girl.

"Few women would carry off so awkward a position with so much ease and grace," he told himself.

He told her how he had learned of his uncle's death and the will.

"Mr. Walsh has been advertising for you in the newspapers ever since your uncle died," Ruth explained.

"I did not know until a week ago," he declared. A strange look flashed across his face for a moment, his eyes had the expression of a man beset by some haunting memory. The next instant, however, it was gone. "I never saw my Uncle Andrew," he continued. "He went away before my parents were married. I was surprised to learn that he died a rich man. The Courtnays have never had much money." He smiled.

At that moment Mrs. Allan came into the room. She looked in astonishment at Walter Courtnay, a dismayed expression crossed her face, but she recovered herself almost at once.

"You are Oscar's son," she said, as he arose and went to meet her.

"And you are my Aunt Nina," he declared, smilingly, as he bent his handsome head and kissed her.

Mrs. Allan's eyes softened; she had been very much attached to her handsome brother and his son was so like him.

"Who would think that you would remember me?" she said.

"I remembered you as soon as I saw you," replied Walter. "I did not remember my cousin, Bruce, however."

She gave him a quick glance.

"Have you met Bruce?" she asked.

"Yes, I saw him in Baltimore, in Mr. Walsh's office," replied Walter. "I did not remember him at all."

"You were very young when you went away," said Mrs. Allan, a little abstractedly. She was thinking what a shock the meeting must have been to her son. "What chance has he against so handsome and attractive a man as Walter Courtnay?" she asked herself.

She said something to that effect after Walter had gone to his room and she was alone with Ruth. The rare color rose hotly in the girl's cheeks.

"Why, I believe you are in love with him already!" Mrs. Allan exclaimed, with a smile under which there was some bitterness.

The color died out of Ruth's cheeks. She looked at Mrs. Allan in a startled, pathetic way. All that was womanly in Nina Allan came to the surface, sweeping away all other considerations, all other feelings. She went to Ruth and kissed her very tenderly.

"Forgive me, dear," she murmured.

Ruth smiled faintly. "It doesn't matter," she said, gently.

"I had no idea she was so emotional," Mrs. Allan was thinking. "I always thought her rather cold." She suppressed a sigh. "Poor Bruce!"

Upstairs in his room, Walter stood gazing dreamily into the fire.

"'A noble woman, nobly planned,'" he murmured, as he turned at length, to the suitcase which he had not started to unpack. "And she is so unlike—her."

CHAPTER IX.

"ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE."

Three months later. A sunny day in March with the warmth of spring in the air. Ruth was standing on the wide portico which extended across the entire front of Courtnay Manor, a dreamy look about her sweet, grave lips and in her eyes. Walter Courtnay came out of the house and approached her. At the sound of his footstep a faint pink tinged her cheek, but she did not turn.

"I was looking for you," he said, as he came to her side.

"I have been standing here for some time," she replied, "The day is delicious."

"Ruth," he whispered, leaning toward her. "I love you. Dearest, will you marry me?"

She did not at once reply. He waited quietly, but his face was pale and his lips were set tensely under the silky mustache. At length she turned to him.

"I love you," she said, very simply, but the look in her brown eyes was more eloquent than her words. His face flushed, his eyes lighted passionately. "I will marry you whenever you wish."

"You have made me so happy, Ruth," he declared. "I love you with all my heart, with all my soul. It is you I want, my darling, not my uncle's wealth."

She smiled. "I had quite forgotten about—that," she said.

He laughed in a radiant, boyish sort of a way.

"The money is not to be despised, but I wish we could divide with Bruce," he exclaimed.

She grew a little grave. She felt very sorry for Bruce Allan, while she realized she could never have cared for him in the way he desired. She had leaned the real meaning of love, and sounded the depths of her own nature, unstirred until Walter Courtnay came into her life.

"But I am far from finding fault with my uncle's will," continued Walter, happily. "For it has given me—you."

He leaned over her and kissed her upon the lips. To her that kiss was a revelation. It brought a loveliness to her face at which Walter marveled, while his pulses quickened and his heart beat rapidly. But he restrained himself and gently released her, for there was as much reverence in his love as passion.

As they stood side by side, Bruce Allan came out of the house. Absorbed in each other, they did not observe him. He stopped, for a moment, and looked at them. Then he turned and re-entered the house. Mechanically, he made his way to the library, where he dropped into a chair and bowed his head on his hands. A thrill of intense pain ran through him, as Ruth's face, as he had just seen it—lovely, radiant, tender—rose, mockingly before him. An overwhelming sense of loss, a bitterness like death possessed him. In those first moments of anguish he gave absolutely no thought to the fortune he would lose by a marriage between his cousin and Ruth. He thought only of having lost the woman he loved.

"And I might have won her if he had never come into her life," he told himself, bitterly.

A passionate sense of revolt seized him, a bitter hatred of his cousin. He sprang up and began walking up and down the floor. Should he relinquish without a struggle, not alone the hope of ultimately winning the woman he loved, but Courtnay Manor and a fortune as well? Was there no way of preventing the marriage? Yes, there was one way—to prove Walter Courtnay unworthy.

Bruce sat down and gave himself up to quiet reflection. Walter Courtnay had come among them a stranger. They knew nothing practically of his past life. He was a man to whom women would naturally be attracted. There might be something in his life that he desired to keep hidden, that if brought to light would destroy Ruth's faith in him and break off the marriage.

"He appears at times to be haunted by some disquieting memory," mused Bruce. "He gives me the impression of a man with a past." He sat for a moment in deep thought. "All's fair in love and war," he murmured, at length, rising. His eyes narrowed and the determined cut of his lips was more pronounced. As he moved toward the door, his mother entered, looking disturbed.

"Bruce, Ruth has just told me that she has promised to marry Walter," she said.

"Yes, mother, I know she has," he answered, quietly.

"It's hard on your, dear," she murmured.

"The marriage has not come off yet," he declared, speaking his thoughts aloud, almost unconsciously. "There's no telling what may happen in six months."

Mrs. Allan shook her head and looked at him pityingly. "Don't delude yourself with false hopes, Bruce," she said, half entreatingly. "It will only prove harder for you in the end. The marriage will take place. What could happen to prevent it?"

"'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,'" he quoted. He smiled and moved toward the door, while she looked after him questioningly.

"I do not understand you, Bruce," she declared. "I thought you would take this very differently."

At the door, he stopped and looked back at her. "I am going away on the noon boat, mother," he said, and went out.

Mrs. Allan sighed. "He reminds so much at times of Andrew," she murmured. "I hope Bruce will not allow his love for Ruth to spoil his life as Andrew's was spoiled."

Bruce Allan left Courtnay Manor without seeing either Ruth or his cousin.

CHAPTER X.

A RELENTLESS PURPOSE.

Several days later Bruce Allan arrived in Ramsay. He had had plenty of time for reflection during the long journey, but it had not changed his purpose. He was as grimly determined as when he left Courtnay Manor to leave nothing un-

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done to prevent the marriage of Ruth and his cousin.

He went to the best hotel in the town, and, after a bath and a lunch, he inquired at the office the location of the Second National Bank. He made his way there and inquired of a clerk for Mr. Walter Courtnay.

"Mr. Walter Courtnay is not here any longer," the clerk explained. "He went East about three months ago. Mr. Eastham, the president, can perhaps give you some information in regard to Mr. Courtnay."

"Thank you," said Bruce. "I would like to see Mr. Eastham."

The clerk showed him into the private office of the president of the bank.

"Mr. Walter Courtnay left us about three months ago," the latter informed Bruce, who was gazing meditatively at a picture on the wall of the president and other officials of the bank, among them that of the late cashier. "We held his position open for him until yesterday, when we received his resignation. He is living in Maryland. I believe he has inherited a fortune. We are very sorry to lose Mr. Courtnay," the president declared, with sincerity. "We think very highly of him."

Bruce thanked the president for his information and took his departure. During the next few days all the information he obtained in regard to his cousin was of the same nature as that afforded him by the president of the Second National Bank. Walter Courtnay was known as a young man of most exemplary habits, his reputation was of the best, he was highly spoken of by every one. His social position was good, his moral standing unquestioned, and so far as Bruce could ascertain, he had never had a serious love affair.

A man, less doggedly determined than Bruce Allan would probably have become discouraged and abandoned his purpose. But Bruce Allan was of different caliber. It never occurred to him to be so easily vanquished. He had not, as yet, found anything in the life of Walter Courtnay that would account for the haunted look he had seen at times in his eyes. Then, quite by accident, he stumbled upon the clew he sought.

One morning, when he had been in Ramsay about ten days, he was standing in the lobby of the hotel, and overheard two men discussing a murder which had been committed four months before.

A girl, between eighteen and nineteen years of age, living in an isolated cottage about ten miles from Ramsay, had been found stabbed to the heart. The girl lived alone with the exception of a middle-aged servant woman. She was known as Mrs. Walters, and was visited at intervals by a young man whom she claimed was her husband.

According to Martha Lyons, the servant, Walters had visited his wife the night of the murder, and they had quarreled. Walters did not remain all night, but left about ten o'clock. The next morning the servant had found her young mistress lying on the floor of the sitting-room, stabbed to the heart. Suspicion pointed strongly to the husband as the murderer, but all efforts to trace him had proved in vain. The servant described him as a handsome, well-built young man, with gray eyes and chestnut brown hair.

Bruce had not been especially interested in the conversation until one of the men gave a personal description of the suspected murderer, when it immediately occurred to him that said description fitted Walter Courtnay. He joined in the conversation, remarking that it seemed strange that all efforts to trace the man, Walters, should have failed. The two men admitted that it did seem strange.

"What became of the servant?" asked Bruce, and he was informed that she was living about five miles from Ramsay with her brother, a farmer. "Was the weapon with which the murder was committed found?" Bruce next inquired.

"No, the weapon was not found," was the reply.

"What sort of weapon was supposed to have been used?"

"From the nature of the wound, the murder was done with a sharp, slender instrument, on the order of a stiletto."

The two men walked away, and Bruce sat in deep thought. He remembered having seen in Walter Courtnay's possession a sharp-pointed dagger with a jeweled handle. He made some remark about the beauty of the workmanship, and Walter, with a strange look on his face, had hastily put the dagger out of sight. It vaguely occurred to Bruce at the time that there was some disquieting memory connected with the dagger.

Later in the day Bruce Allan went to the Second National Bank and asked for the loan of a picture like the one hanging in the president's office, giving a plausible reason for the request, which was readily granted. With the picture in his possession, Bruce procured a horse and trap, and started for the farm where he had been told the servant of the murdered girl was living.

A month from the day he went away with the purpose of trying to discover something in the past life of Walter Courtnay that would prevent the marriage between him and Ruth, Bruce Allan returned. He had succeeded in making a discovery that was appalling, succeeded beyond his most sanguine hopes. He arrived on the noon boat, and as he entered the hall at Courtnay Manor, Ruth was coming down the stairs.

"Why, Bruce!" she exclaimed, and came toward him smilingly.

The first glance at her face, the thrilling delight of again seeing her swept away any lingering regret that he might have had at bringing home to his cousin the awful thing of which he believed him to be guilty. As he shook hands with Ruth, he noted that she seemed to have grown lovelier. Love is a great beautifier. Bruce knew that he was about to make her suffer cruelly, but there was nothing to do but tell her the terrible truth.

"Will you meet me in the library in half an hour, Ruth?" he asked. "I have something of importance to say to you."

She looked at him a little questioningly as she replied in the affirmative. She was waiting for him when he entered the library. She looked up as he came and stood beside her chair.

"Ruth," he began, "what I am about to say to you will prove a great shock. It concerns the man you have promised to marry, Walter Courtnay." He paused.

"Yes?" she murmured, looking at him steadily. "What have you to say to me of—him?"

"Walter Courtnay is entirely unworthy of you, Ruth," Bruce declared. "He is guilty of a crime, the crime of murder."

She looked at him unmoved; she smiled with utter incredulity.

"I do not believe it," she said, quietly. "I do not mean to say that you are wantonly bringing such an accusation, Bruce. But you are laboring under some extraordinary delusion."

He shook his head.

"No."

"Whom do you accuse Walter of having murdered?"

"His young wife."

"His wife?"

"Yes, he was secretly married. He learned of the death of his uncle and the will on the fifteenth day of December. That night he killed his wife in order that he might be free to fulfil the conditions of the will."

She had paled, but she spoke with wonderful self-control.

"It may be true what you assert in regard to his having been married," she said. "But that he is guilty of murder, the cowardly murder of a helpless, defenseless woman, and that woman his wife, I know to be false."

Before Bruce had time to make any reply, the door opened and Walter Courtnay entered.

The conclusion of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

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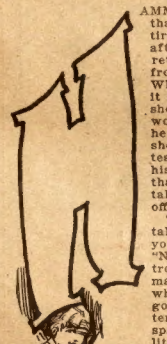

HAMMOND noticed that his wife looked tired one Saturday afternoon when he returned home early from the office. When he spoke of it she admitted that she was pretty well worn out, and when he discovered that she had dropped a tear on the lapel of his coat he insisted that she should take an afternoon off.

"You're worn out taking care of that youngster," he said. "Now, you just trot along to the matinee or anywhere you feel like going, and I'll attend to the offspring. He needs a little maculine discipline, anyway."

Mrs. Hammond, demurred on the ground that she didn't want Hammond to devote all his Saturday afternoon to taking care of the baby, but Hammond was determined and eventually had his way.

"You're the dearest thing that ever lived," murmured his wife, as she kissed him good-by. "But I'm afraid you'll be sorry. Baby is so—so effervescent."

"Pooh!" scoffed Hammond. Then he smiled in a superior way.

When he returned to the livingroom Hammond found his son, who was seated on a small stool and looking quite impossibly virtuous, gravely contemplating the landscape from the front window. The situation appeared easy, so Hammond sat down on the chair nearest the infant and pulled out his oldest smelliest pipe.

"What do you say to having a smoke, old man?" he inquired, jocularly.

"Oogh!" replied the baby, approvingly. Then he squirmed off his stool and went and stood by his father's side.

"Rather a good stunt, having the feminine element take itself off occasionally, hey?" Hammond inquired pleasantly, as he pushed the tobacco into his pipe with his little finger. He laid the pipe on the arm of the chair, rose and crossed over to the mantel to get a match.

"Humph!" said the baby in a muffled tone.

Hammond turned in time to see him cramming as much of the pipe's stem down his throat as he could conveniently insert there. However, as his father leaped toward him, he gave a chuckle, removed the pipe from his mouth, dexterously shook the contents out on his own clean little cranium, then threw the pipe upon the hearth. The sound made by the amber mouthpiece as it broke against the tiles caused the baby to become fairly delirious with joy. Squealing like an ecstatic pig, he ran from the livingroom back into the diningroom.

Hammond set his lips firmly. "Now," he said to himself, "is the time to teach him the rudiments of being a law-abiding citizen."

He followed the baby into the diningroom, where he was sitting under the table. Hammond stooped down and spoke sternly to the chuckling miscreant.

"Come out, son," he said.

Son merely hitched himself farther over toward the other side of the table, shaking his head delightedly. He then ran around the room three times, dexterously avoiding his father's outstretched hand every time he passed,

SO HAMMOND SAT DOWN.

then suddenly stopped and threw his arms around his father's knees, shouting joyously.

Hammond disentangled himself and taking his son by the hand led him back into the livingroom.

"Pick up that pipe, young man," said Hammond, sternly. The baby blinked at him and the corners of his lips curled upward. "I mean it," insisted Hammond. The baby responded with his familiar chuckle and capered cheerfully.

"Very well," said Hammond in a tone of finality. He led his son out into the hall. "Now, will you go back and pick up the pipe?" he inquired, "or will you go into the lavatory and stay for the rest of the afternoon?"

For answer the baby dived into the lavatory and plunged headlong into a pile of pleasantly plump pillows that had been left on the floor to get the sun. Finding this quite out satisfying, he presently righted himself and beamed upon his progenitor.

"You'll stay here, then?" asked Hammond. "Very well. You can come out when you're ready to mind daddy."

The baby merely projected himself once more into the mass of feathers. Thereupon Hammond shut the door and went back to the livingroom. Three-quarters of an hour later he returned and led his son forth to the scene of battle.

"Now," he said, assuming a frown that should have sent terror to the infantile heart, "pick up that pipe."

The small boy looked up into his father's face and the smile faded from his own plump countenance. He dropped his father's hand and got down slowly upon his knees. Once more he glanced up at his father. Seeing no sign of relenting, he put out his hand slowly, picked up the pipe, struggled to his feet and, with remarkable good aim, planted the pipe upon his father's solar plexus. Then, shouting in mirth, he fled.

"Your son has no moral sense," said Hammond to his wife that evening. "It would be a waste of valuable time to try to instill into him a consciousness of the basic principles of right and wrong! He's unregenerate and likewise a perfect limb. But I'll admit that he's a sport, my dear. He certainly is a dead game sport."

* * *

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A KNIGHT OF THE RANGE

By STEPHEN ANGUS COX

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CHAPTER VIII.
ARTHUR KNIGHT LEAVES.

THAT evening Arthur called his head boss, Jim Hardy, to one side, and said: "Jim, I'm goin' away."

Hardy stared. "Goin' away?" he exclaimed. "Whar yuh goin', Arthur?"

"To Denver."

"What for?"

"To acquire knowledge."

Hardy eyed his friend with a puzzled air.

"I kind uh thought yuh knowed uh plenty," he said, after a moment.

Knight shook his head.

"No, yuh're mistaken, Jim," he said. "I don't know nothin' scarcely."

"Is that right?" quizzically.

"It sure is. I don't know as much as the kids what goes to school to Miss Ormsby, up at Biggsby's Knoll. I say 'yuh' for 'you,' 'ain't' for 'is not,' 'seen' for 'saw,' 'has went' for 'has gone,' 'gimme' for 'give me,' an' I don't know how to sling the English language like it's writ out in the grammar-book, none whatever." Knight paused to get his breath, and Hardy nodded and said gravely:

"Anythin' else the matter with yuh, Arthur?"

"Yes, lots. I'm uh big, awkward, ignorant boor uv uh cowboy, only fit to drive cows to water. I'm big-headed, quarrelsome, meddlesome, an' on top uh that I'm bigoted as thunder, and am an impudent, arrogant, good-for-nothin' lout!"

Knight paused, and Hardy slowly and calmly rolled a cigarette. Having finished this important task to his satisfaction, he drawled:

"How did yuh come to find all this out, Arthur? Who told yuh about et, anyhow?"

Knight hesitated, colored slightly, and then blurted out:

"The schoolma'am."

Hardy nodded. "I thought so," he said dryly. "When did she tell yuh this?"

"This afternoon."

"Humph!" Hardy struck a match and lighted his cigarette, and then, after taking a few puffs, he gave vent to a sigh of satisfaction, and said:

"I'm guessin' that schoolma'am added to the afore-mentioned bunch uh information that she handed out to yuh so freely that she despised yuh, simply hated the sight uh your ugly mug, an' didn't never want yuh to show up on her grazin'-ground no more. Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right, Jim," acknowledged Knight. "Them was the sentiments she expressed, all right, though she didn't say et in exactly the same words yuh have used."

"I s'pose not," dryly. "She used grammar-book English, I reckon, which is some different frum plain United States. I think there is one thing that she didn't tell yuh, though, Arthur, an' seein' as how yuh are acquirin' knowledge, I might as well tell yuh myself. You are sure somethin' else on top uh them other things, somethin' that she didn't name."

"What, Jim? Out with et. I sure didn't think she had left out anythin', but if so, why let's have et."

"All right. She neglected, or forgot to tell yuh, Arthur, but et's a fact that yuh're—uh damn fool."

"We won't fight about et, Jim," with a faint grin. "Mebby I am—but, why?"

"Why? For not callin' schoolma'am's bluff, that's why. Now, I know a little bit about wimmen folks, Arthur, 'cause I happened to have half uh dozen sisters, an' I've heerd 'em talk lots uh times, an' I know that if schoolma'am hadn't been kind uh struck with yuh, she wouldn't never have gone to the trouble to tell yuh all them things about yourself. She'd jest uh paid no attention to yuh, same as if yuh wasn't on the map. But when she stood up in front uh you, an' reeled off your pedigree like that, at the same time showin' consider'ble warmth uh feelin' along with et, why et's plain as kin be that ef yuh had called her bluff, yuh'd sure uh won out, with plenty to spare." Hardy paused and took a few whiffs at the cigarette, after which he gravely regarded his companion a few moments and then went on: "Now, what yuh had ought to uh done, Arthur, is plain. Ef yuh had jumped offen Thunderbolt an' grabbed schoolma'am aroun' the waist an' squeezed her till she hollered, an' then uh kissed her a few on them sassy red lips uh her'n, why she'd sure have come offen her perch. She wouldn't uh thought anythin' about yuh bein' impudent, ignorant, bigoted, or any uh them things, nor she wouldn't uh cared whether yuh talked grammar-book English or jest Choctaw-Comanche. Yuh would uh had her tight an' fast an' no more ropin' needed, none whatever. Take et from me, Arthur, for I sure know what I'm talkin' about. Yuh missed your chance, that time, but ef yuh are stuck on schoolma'am, why stay an' have et out with her. Don't give up, my boy. Yuh've got more nor uh fightin' chance, yuh hear what your uncle tells yuh."

Knight's face had brightened somewhat as he listened to the words of his friend, but at the conclusion he shook his head slowly and said, with conviction:

"That might work all right with some wimmen, Jim, but blame me ef I believe et would uh worked with schoolma'am. I've sized her up pretty carefully, an' I don't think et would be healthy to grab her sudden an' forcible-like, as yuh suggested ,an'—an' do the way yuh said."

"Well, mebby yuh're right, Arthur," said Hardy. "Schoolma'am might uh clawed yuh some ef yuh had tried my recipe—but ef et had be'n me, I'd sure uh tried et."

"An' got your block knocked off, too, like enough, Jim. Well, I'm goin' to Denver in the mornin', an' yuh will be superintendent uh the ranch in my place, old man. I'm goin' to go down thar an' mingle with them book-sharps an' absorb knowledge a whole lot, an' then when I'm able to sling grammar-bock English, maybe I'll come back, an' ef schoolma'am's still here, I may try another round with her."

"All right, Arthur. Yuh're sure the doctor. Ef yuh want to drift, jest on account uh a slim little snip uv uh schoolma'am like thet, et's your own bizness; but ef et wuz me, I'd stay here an' fight et out with her, ef et took all summer an' the biggest share uh the winter."

"Et wouldn't be no use, Jim. I'm plumb sure uh that. She meant what she said, an' I couldn't never git in ropin' distance uh her, ef I stayed here till Gabriel tooted his horn. But mebby ef I go away an' come back filled to the muzzle with sure enough book-sharp wisdom, she'll be interested enough to leave an openin' so's I kin git another holt an' try her another whirl."

"All right," nodded Hardy. "Et's fur yuh to say. I guess I kin handle the job here on the ranch all right, an' ef I git uh chance on the side to put in a lick fur yuh with the schoolma'am, I'll sure do et."

As they were about to part, Hardy stopped Knight with a word, and after taking a few puffs at his cigarette, he said: "Say, Arthur, this here freak notion uh your'n about driftin', is goin' to be kind uh hard on—on Katie, ain't et? Yuh know, she thinks uh lot uh yuh, Arthur."

"I know et, Jim," was Knight's reply. "An' I think uh lot uh Katie—I mean Kate, too, but——Jim, I just got to go down to Denver an' lay in uh supply uh book-wisdom, so's to git up onto a level, kind uh, with the schoolma'am. Katie wants me to be happy, an' when she knows that I've made up my mind that the only thing for me to do is to drop out uh the game for uh little while, she'll say go."

And Arthur was right. Katie Fletcher did say for him to go; and she did it because she saw he wanted to do so and would not be satisfied unless he did so, because she wanted him to be happy. And because she was only a little girl, only a few months past twelve years of age, nobody suspected what it cost Katie to see Arthur Knight leave the Circle O, and had any of her friends known the hours she spent weeping, the night after he went away, they would have said she was a little simpleton. But would they have been right in saying this?

CHAPTER IX.
KATIE TAKES CHARGE.

Arthur Knight had been in Denver a month, taking private lessons from a teacher there, and was learning how to handle the English language. It was slow work, but the cowboy was in deadly earnest and was determined to learn enough in six months so that he could return to Circle O and hold his own in "a talkin' match with schoolma'am," as he termed it in his thoughts.

But his career as a student was to be rudely cut short, for one afternoon, while his teacher was painstakingly trying to instill book-knowledge into the head of the cowboy, which, as he put it, was "so chock-full uh range bizness that thar wasn't room fur much uh anythin' else," the door flew open and Jim Hardy, walked unceremoniously into the room.

"An' not to please me, schoolma'am?"

"Git your hat, Arthur," said Jim, "an' come along with me."

"Where to?" asked Knight, staring at his friend wonderingly, too surprised to ask him why he was there.

"The Circle O. Katie's sick, Arthur, an' wants yuh. She won't live, the Doc says, an' she wants to see yuh afore she —afore she goes. She may live a month, an' then ag'in she might die afore we git back—so don't stan' thar gapin'. Git yer hat an' come with me, quick. We want to ketch that north-bound train."

Then Knight woke up suddenly. He grabbed his hat, and hurried out of the room at the heels of Jim, leaving his late teacher staring after him with mouth agape. Arthur Knight had evidently forgotten there was such a person in existence.

The teacher shook his head, slowly. "What extremely rude and abrupt creatures those cowboys are, to be sure!" he murmured. "Well, at any rate I lose nothing, for he had paid me in advance for the entire course."

As they hastened to the station, Arthur Knight asked his companion numerous eager questions, and learned that Katie Fletcher had taken sick about two weeks after he left, with a kind of slow fever, according to the doctor, and after wrestling with the disease for a couple of weeks, the physician had declared that it was incurable, and that the little girl might die at any time, though again she might live a month.

"Katie kep' callin' for yuh, Arthur," said Jim, "an' so instid uh writin', I came after yuh, fur we was afraid a letter might miscarry, yuh know."

"Poor little Katie—I mean Kate," said Arthur, a sad look on his face. "I hope the Doc is mistaken, Jim, an' that she'll get well."

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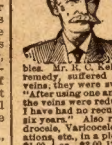

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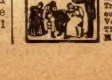

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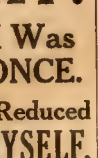

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"Ef anythin'd make her well, seein' yuh back on the ranch'd do et, Arthur," was the reply. "But," sadly, "I'm afraid that nothin'll help 'er. That's what the Doc thinks, anyhow, I know."

After they were on the train and speeding northward toward Cheyenne, Jim told Knight that the schoolma'am was at the Fletcher ranch.

"She's be'n thar ever since Katie took sick," he explained, "an' she sets up with Katie every other night an' helps take keer uh her every day arter school-hours" Then, with a side-glance at Knight, he went on: "Schoolma'am ain't be'n the same sence yuh left the Circle O, Arthur. Katie told me sev'ral times, durin' the first two weeks arter yuh left that Miss Ormsby wasn't like herse'f at all, that she was quiet and sad-like an' moped aroun'. An' she was mighty good to Katie, who told me she b'leeved et was because schoolma'am knowed yuh liked 'er—Katie, yuh know. I'll tell yuh what, Arthur, et looks to your uncle like yuh got uh cinch thar. All yuh got to do is stan' pat, an' she'll come to yuh, all right."

Knight shook his head dubiously. He remembered the spirit that the schoolma'am had shown and could not think of her as being meek and tame-like. "I don't know about that, Jim," he said. "Yuh may be right, an' I hope yuh are, but I doubt et."

"I don't doubt et none," said Jim, with conviction. "Yuh know, I told yuh afore yuh left that yuh'd uh won ef yuh'd called her bluff, that time when she read your pedigree to yuh so free an' plenty. I believe that yet, an' schoolma'am's actions sence yuh left is proof that I was right, so take yer uncle's advice, Arthur, an' stan' pat, an' yuh're a sure winner."

"I'll try et, Jim; but 'nless she's changed mightily frum what she was, the stand-pat bizness'll be on the other side."

"Not ef yuh play your han' right, old man. Don't let 'er bluff yuh. Call 'er, boy, an' then yuh'll git 'er, sure."

A couple of the best horses on the Circle O were awaiting Knight and Hardy at the railroad station, and they mounted and set out for the ranch without an instant's delay. The cowboy who had brought the horses told them that Katie was about the same. "She jest keeps askin' for Arthur," he vouchsafed. "Seems like that's all she wants, to see yuh ag'in."

"Thank Heaven she's no worse!" said Knight, and Jim said "Amen!" to which he added: "Maybe she'll git well when yuh git thar, Arthur."

"She'll be glad to see me, I guess," said Knight; "but that won't cure fever."

They did not spare their mounts, and when they dashed up to the ranchhouse, the horses were a white lather. Leaping to the ground, the cowboys hastened into the house, and were met by Mrs. Fletcher, who shook hands with Arthur joyously, and said: "I'm so glad you have come, Arthur! Katie has been calling for you all the time, and I almost hope—yes, I almost believe that your presence will check the fever and start her on the road to recovery."

"I hope yuh're right, Mrs. Fletcher!" said Knight, in a low voice.

A few moments later he was ushered into the room where Katie lay, and at sight of him a smile lit up her wan face and she stretched her arms out toward him. "Arthur!" she cried, a joyous ring to her voice. "I knew you would come!"

Helen Ormsby was seated near the head of the bed, but if Arthur Knight saw her, he gave no sign. He seemed to have eyes only for the sick girl. He advanced quickly, and kneeling beside the bed, bent over and kissed her.

"Uh course yuh knowed I'd come, Katie—I mean Kate!" he said, gently. "Why, I'd uh crawled on my han's an' knees to get to yuh, ef I couldn't uh come any other way. An' now, yuh're goin' to get well, that's what yuh're goin' to do. Yuh'n me'll be out ridin' the range in less'n a week!"

A smile of happiness went over Katie's face. "I believe that I can get well again, if you stay here, Arthur. And I think I know something that will make you be willing to stay."

"So do I, Katie—I mean Kate. The knowledge that my stayin' will maybe help yuh to get well 'll make me stay."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Arthur. It makes me very happy; but there is something else that will have a still stronger holding effect, I am sure. Miss Ormsby, come here."

The schoolma'am rose and approached the bedside, and Katie smiled at her and said: "Sit beside me, on the bed."

Miss Ormsby took the seat, as directed, and then Katie, still smiling, said: "Take hold of her hand, Arthur."

The big cowboy started, gave a quick, inquiring glance at Helen Ormsby, blushed and held out his hand in a half-frightened way. The schoolma'am had avoided his gaze, and he hardly knew what was going to happen.

"Put your hand in his, Miss Ormsby," commanded Katie. The pupil was ruling the teacher, this time, and after a brief hesitation, and with the rich color mounting to her temples, Helen Ormsby obeyed, placing her hand in that of the cowboy. It trembled, he noted, and the touch sent a quivering thrill through him.

"I know you like Miss Ormsby, Arthur," said Katie, a little tremor in her voice; "and I know you like Arthur, Miss Ormsby, and I know he went away because you had a quarrel, and as I want Arthur to stay here I want you both to promise not to quarrel any more, and to —to say you'll stay together always. I want this because—because I know it'll make Arthur—I mean you both happy. Promise!"

She looked eagerly from one to the other, and Arthur, after a look at the face of the little girl, turned his gaze inquiringly toward Miss Ormsby. She met his glance an instant, then her eyes drooped and she blushed. There was brief hesitation on her part, and then she said, in a low voice:

"Oh, well, to please you, Katie, and make you happy, I will give the promise."

"An' not to please me, schoolma'am?" queried Knight, who was inclined to banter a bit, now that things seemed to be coming his way.

"Well—to please you a bit, too, perhaps," replied Helen, with a meekness that surprised the cowboy, who could not forget how volcanic she had been before he went away.

"That's all right," he said; "but," with a grin, "I ain't finished my course at school yet. I'm still an ignorant boor, what says 'yuh' for 'you,' 'ain't' for 'is not,' 'gimmie' for 'give me,' an' all that kind uh thing. In fact, I don't know nothin' scarcely."

"Miss Ormsby'll teach you, Arthur," said Katie. "Won't you, Miss Ormsby?"

The schoolma'am glanced at Arthur Knight, blushed, and looked quickly away again, and then bending over, she kissed Katie, after which she said in a voice scarcely above a whisper: "Yes, dear."

"Hurrah," exclaimed Knight. "Then et's settled. Yuh're to be my teacher an' learn me a lot, but I want to warn yuh, schoolma'am, thet yuh'll find me the hardest pupil to manage thet ever yuh struck, that's whatever!"

"I'm not afraid," smiled Helen. "If you get unruly, all I'll have to do will be to get Katie hold of you. She can manage you."

A sober look came over the cowboy's face, and he bent over and kissed Katie, and then said with tender earnestness:

"That's the truth, schoolma'am. Whatever Katie—I mean Kate—says, goes with me, every time, yuh bet!"

A little later, when left alone for a while, Katie gazed long and soberly at the ceiling, and then, as if answering some unspoken thought, she murmured: "But—Arthur's going to stay!"

The End.

Deduction.

A director of one of the great transcontinental railroads was showing his 3-year-old daughter the pictures in a work on natural history. Pointing to a picture of a zebra, he asked the baby to tell him what it represented. Baby answered, "Colty." Pointing to a picture of a tiger in the same way, she answered "Kitty." Then a lion, and she answered "Doggy." Elated with her seeming quick perception, he then turned to the picture of a chimpanzee and said: "Baby, what is this?"

"Papa."

Those Bungalows.

"Smart man, that Zeke Howe."

"How so?"

"Hadn't you heard? Since he's gone out of the chicken business he has whitewashed all the hencoops, put windows in 'em, and is renting them out for summer cottages."—Chicago's Library.

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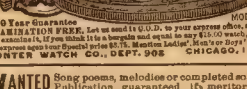

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THIS SUIT FREE and Big Outfit

Wang—Gee whiz, old man, you are a sight! Why, you are pasted with fudge and smeared with chewing gum. Get mixed up in a candy kitchen?

Bang—Worse than that. I attempted to umpire a baseball game between two girl teams.

His Last Words.

His companions bent over him with pitiful earnestness, and stared beseechingly into his waxen features. Again came the flutter of the eyelids, but this time his will mastered approaching death. His lips weakly struggled to execute his last commands, and the friends bent closer to hear the faltering whisper.

"I am—gone? Yes—er—I know. Go to Milly. Tell her—er—I died with—her name on—my lips: that I—er—have loved—her—her—alone—er—always. And Bessie—tell—er—tell Bessie the same thing."

In the Near Future.

Old Friend—"And so both of your children are studying professions?"

Hostess—"Yes, my daughter is in a polytechnic college, studying mechanical engineering, and my son is in Paris, learning dressmaking."

Well Drenched.

"Don't you think it is mighty desirable to have hot and cold water in your house?"

"Not when your wife keeps you in one, and throws the other on all your plans."

Willie's Disappointment.

Mother—"Did you have a good time at the party?"

Willie—"Naw. I said no when they asked me to have some more ice cream and the stingy things never asked me again."

Indecision.

"These are the days when the young divinity student who has a good delivery must undergo a terrific mental struggle."

"About what?"

"Whether to preach or pitch."

Just a Pose.

"I think she will make a fine wife. I have been calling on her for several months now, and nearly always find her darning one of her father's socks."

"That caught me, too, until I found out that it was the same sock."

Pretty Mad.

Clare (after a tiff)—"I presume you would like your ring back."

George (Never mind); keep it. No other girl I know could use that ring, unless she wore it on her thumb."

Forgot His Last Name.

There's a young man in the theatrical district named William Sellery. Mr. Sellery is very well liked, indeed, and is anything but a vegetable in his habits, efficiency or hours. The other day he stopped to speak to a show girl he knew. The girl was accompanied by a friend. "Say, Bill," said she, "I want you to know muh fren, Miss Mairie Masters. Miss Masters, lemme present Mr. William——"

She was hung up by a bad memory for a moment. "Bill," said she, "to save muh life, I can't remember whether your last name is Lettuce or Cabbage."

A Peerless Maiden.

Impecunious Nobleman—"Sir, I understand you have a peerless daughter?"

Old Moneybags—"Yes, and you might as well understand first as last that she is going to stay peerless, as far as you fortune hunters are concerned."

An Incident of Traffic.

"Didn't you tell me dat speckled hoss you sold me was gaited?" asked Uncle Rastus.

"Dat's what I told you," replied Mr. Erastus Pinkley, "and dat's what he is. He's variegated."

An Artistic Consideration.

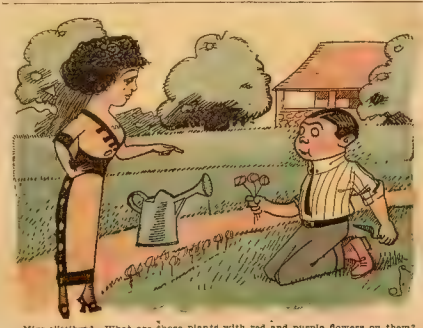
"So you think you would improve the ballet?"

"We couldn't help improving it," replied young Mrs. Torkins. "I have seen pictures of a lot of ballets, and the decorations on them were simply atrocious."

An Ambitious Ball Player.

Gabe—I see that Congress is going to free the poor serfs who are held in bondage by the Baseball Trust.

Steve—Well, if I catch some one would sentence me to five years servitude in one of the major leagues.



Miss Citibred—What are those plants with red and purple flowers on them?

The Floriculturist—Asters.

Miss Citibred—And what are those others with prickers on them and no flowers?

The Floriculturist—Disasters.

Not a Crime.

The Angler—"Is this public water for fishing?"

The Native—"Oh, aye!"

The Angler—"Then it won't be a crime to land a fish?"

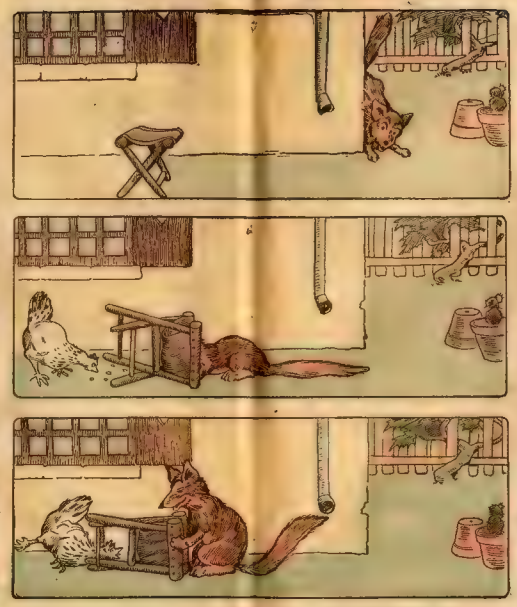
The Native—"No; it 'ud be a bloomin' miracle!"

Of One Mind.

Young De Bore (hunting for something to say)—"I wish I had lived in the knightly days of old."

Weary Beauty—"So do I."

AN AMERICAN FOX.



A Fair Reasoner.

Discouraged Suitor—"Do you ever reason?"

Miss Flightie—"Reason? I should say I did. I took up a paper only yesterday, and reasoned out all the points in the joke column."

No Attraction.

Good Minister—"That new choir isn't filling the church the way I thought it would."

Mr. Worldite—"Well, what can you expect? You've got a homely tenor and a married soprano."

Fond Recollections.

She—"You haven't brought me a box of candy since we were married."

He—"Yes, but think of the tons I brought you before we were married."

The Blundering Fishman.

"Here's some fish, sir, marked C. O. D."

"Send it away. I ordered shad."

Gossip.

'I heard the missus talking about us," said the cook.

"What did she say?" inquired the chambermaid.

"She said we was neither of us any good."

"Ain't it terrible the way people talk about one another nowadays."

His Idea.

Willie—Say, pa, what part of speech is woman?

Pa—Woman, my son, is no part of speech; she is all of it.

Information for Office-Seekers

"Why do they call Washington the city of magnificent distances?"

"Because," answered the disappointed office-seeker, "it is such a long way between what you go after and what you get."

Sidesteps.

Doctor—The increasing deafness of your wife is an indication of advancing years, and you can tell her that.

Husband—Hum! Would you mind telling her yourself, doctor?"

Very Likely.

Mrs. Bilkins—"What a commanding presence that lady has."

Mr. Bilkins—"Yes, I guess she's married."

Romance Today.

"I don't think he really loves me."

"Why not?"

"He's mighty slow about starting proceedings for his divorce."

Too Much for Them.

A Northern man made a visit to the plantation of a Southern Colonel and was almost devoured the first night by mosquitoes. The next morning the Northern man asked the colored butler about the mosquito plague. "Don't the mosquitoes bother the 'Colonel?" he asked.

"Not much, sah," the butler replied. "The fust part of the night the Colonel am too drunk to feel mosquitoes, and the last part of the night they is too drunk to bother him."

A Muddy Track.

"How far is it to the next town?" inquired the traveler in the mud-besplattered buggy.

"'Bout ten mile, mister," said the Illinois farmer by the roadside.

"Long miles, too, I suppose."

"No, sir, they're not so very long, but you'll find them pretty blamed thick."

A Realist.

"An artist must have a lively imagination."

"Yep," replied Farmer Corntossel. "If he hadn't, he couldn't git up them pictures that are on the outside of packages of garden seeds."

Too Much of a Good Thing.

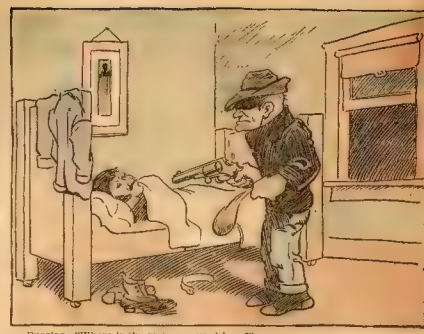
Jimson—"What became of that man who had twenty-seven medals for saving people from drowning?"

Dime Worker—"He fell in one day when he had them all on, and the weight of 'em sunk him."

A Man of Little Knowledge.

"I wish I could be paid for what I know, instead of being paid for what I do."

"Good heavens. Don't you want to make more than ten cents a week?"



Burglar—"Where is the money around here?"

Man in Bed—"If you'll tell me I'll divide with you, burgy."

Refused to Vote for Vice Versa.

A contractor and his brick mason were seriously discussing presidential timber. Said Walsh, the mason: "Sur-r-re, this fellah Wilson Woodrow looks pr-ret-ty good t' me. I think I'——" "But, Mike," interrupted the contractor, "you have the right wrong. It's vice versa, he added the while growing broader. "Vice versa, be it?" Mike queried. "Well, I'll not vote fu-r-r any dago!"

The Difference.

Tim—"Say, Jim, what's the difference between a soldier, young ladies, and an Italian fruit stand?"

Jim—"I don't know. Give it up. What's the answer?"

Tim—"The soldier faces powder and young ladies powder faces."

Jim—"Yes; but where does the Italian fruit stand come in?"

Tim—"Oh, that's where you get your lemon."—Judge.

Real Test.

Diogenes was searching for the honest man.

"Find a suburbanite who will tell you his real opinion of country life in winter," we advised.

Herewith he departed to apply the greatest test of all.

Sure Thing.

"It is just as easy to be an optimist as a pessimist."

"Go on with your wisdom."

"The pessimist growls because rain prevents the ball games. The optimist smiles as he thinks of all those double-headers coming."

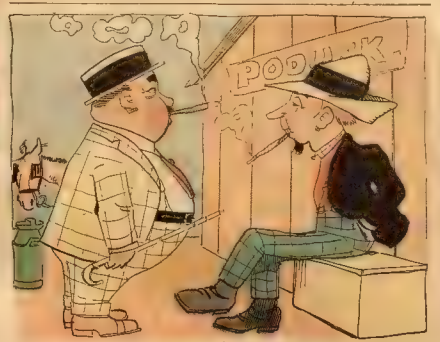
The Difference.

Lady—"I see you advertise homemade bread."

Baker—"Yes, ma'am."

Lady—"Does it taste like homemade?"

Baker—"No, indeed, ma'am. It's sweet and light."



Mr. Summerhome—What's the one great regret of your life, Mr. Slowe?

Mr. Slowe—Missed seein' the four-fourteen go by in '85

A Pointed Question.

"We girls have formed an anti-kissing club."

"Well, has it stimulated the young men of the neighborhood any?"

The Reason.

"See here!" cried the boy's father, "if you don't behave I'll whip you."

"I wisht you would," replied the bad boy.

"You do, eh?"

"Yes, cause when it's all over ma will gimme some candy."

Experienced.

Mr. Green—"Will you believe me when I tell you that I was never before engaged to any girl?"

Miss Summermaid—"Oh, I knew that the first time you kissed me."

Willie's Sentence.

Governess—"Who can make a sentence with the word 'grewsome' in it?"

Little Willie—"I can! The man stopped shaving and grew some whiskers."

Better Than a Tramp.

Family Doctor (to young lady patient)—"You should take a tramp through the woods before breakfast."

Patient—"Oh, doctor, I can get better company than a tramp!"

WATCHING THE GAME.

Hunter—"There don't seem to be any game around these parts.

"As there is nothing doing, guess I'll have a little game of solitaire.

"Now, if I can get the tray——

"And now the queen.

"Ha, ha, ha! I got it!"

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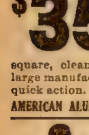

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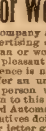

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THE LEGACY

By JAMES C. THRELFALL

IT WAS at the end of the twenty-ninth chapter of the twenty-ninth volume of Rollins's pondersome history of the world that Bud Holmes found the penciled message from his grandfather. It goes to show that it pays to be thorough in everything, even though the undertaking be to read such a dry-as-dust series of histories as Rollins had succeeded in grinding out.

Bud didn't know how many years he had put in, in reading the history to that point, but it had been the only literature in the ramshackle old house where he and his poverty-stricken brother Claude lived, and he had spelled out the pages of the series, volume by volume, during his leisure hours, for an awfully long time. Truth to tell he didn't have a very complete idea of the history, as he succeeded in forgetting it almost as fast as he read it.

As soon as Bud deciphered the message from his grandfather the remarks that the old man had made on his deathbed to his two grandsons that they would find something of interest in the history mentioned came to Bud's memory. At the time the two supposed the remark due to some slight aberration of the old man's mind, for it was a little weak along toward the end, and the Holmeses had never been noted as a family for scholarliness themselves, or for encouraging scholarly ways in others.

The note was scrawled along the side of a few closing lines of the chapter mentioned in the small crabbed hand which the old man wrote. The words were misspelled, for spelling was, no more than reading or writing, ever a strong point in the Holmes family.

The note read: "Take the fifth brike from the end of the fir-place in the second roe from the toppe, ther is bills ther for fifty thousend dolers."

There was but the one fireplace in the old house, and that was in the room in which Bud Holmes was sitting. He walked over to the hearth and pulled out the specified brick. Sure enough, the dull green end of a big package of bills was plainly visible.

Bud heard Claude's footsteps as that worthy shuffled lazily down the hall, and he thrust the brick into place just as the latter came into the room. The two brothers had eked out a miserable existence in the old house for the ten years since their grandfather had wheezed away his life in this same fireplaced room. They worked, but their work did not seem to bring them in the best returns in the world. The soil of the Holmes farm was thin, and yielded its substance in the most niggardly way. There is nothing so wearing as life on an unproductive farm. The years to come held better promise than the ones that were gone. Bud had grown to hate the whole thing. He felt that he hated Claude. There was certainly nothing attractive about the latter, as he stood with his dirty shirt gaping open in front and with a week's growth of beard covering his face.

"What you got?" Claude asked, sullenly.

"Nothin'" replied Bud. "Just a-chunkin' up the fire a little."

"You looked when I came in like you had somethin' on your mind a whole lot bigger'n chunkin' up fires. Besides, what's the use of chunkin' the fire up a day like this, an' wood's a-gettin' purty skurce, 'n' beside I cut the last."

"Aw, go to h——," and Bud turned on his heel and walked angrily out of the room.

As he left the room he gave a glance over his shoulder at the brick which hid the legacy, to make sure that he had got it back properly. It looked to be all right. Bud didn't look too closely for fear of still further arousing his brother's suspicions.

"Back in a few minutes," he said, through the open door.

"I don't care if you never come back," cried Claude.

Bud stepped to the back porch. The excitement of his discovery had gone to his head. His heart was throbbing like a trip-hammer. He decided that a drink of water would do him good. He would go down to the spring and get a bucket of water and give Claude a chance to get out of the room.

Bud was sorry that it had to be water. He wished he had some whisky. He and Claude had been to San Andreas the day before and had drunk a little more whisky than was good for them. That was one thing that made the two so grouchy today.

It was a half-mile to the spring, and Bud tried to loiter on the way, but the nervous strain under which his system labored was too much for him, and he caught himself breaking into a run two or three times. He felt like yelling with sheer joy at his discovery. It began raining softly, with an occasional peal of thunder, but his excitement was so great he scarcely noticed it. As soon as he had filled the pail he started back.

Fifty thousand dollars! It would take him some place where the life of San Andreas County would never touch him again. He would have clothes and wine and friends, he the outcast, who had scarcely known for years what it was to have two garments of the same texture or color, he whose clothes today would shock a self-respecting scarecrow would tomorrow fit himself with soft warm clothing.

Today he lacked the funds to buy even a drink of the cheap whisky that his system craved. Tomorrow he would imbibe choice wines from Italy and feed upon earth's choicest viands.

He wondered where his grandfather could have got such a sum of money. Stolen it probably, and been too miserly ever afterwards to disturb it. He had certainly never shown any signs of ready money since Bud had known him. The old man had come from Missouri to San Andreas County directly after the Civil War. Some said that the old man had served in both armies during the war, and had deserted from both. Bud rather thought from things that the old man had said, or left unsaid, that it might be true.

He realized that he must be cautious. Claude would never know of his find or share it. He would slip away that night under cover of the darkness with the legacy in his possession. At Los Angeles he would fit himself out in clothing and hit away for Chicago and the delights of the East.

Bud awoke suddenly from his day-dreaming, as the recollection came to him with a flash that he had left the book with its telltale message lying face upward on the mantelshelf. Suppose Claude should see it! What a fool he had been!

He dashed the bucket of water to the ground and started for the house on the run. Fortunately he had not far to go. As he stepped up on the porch, Bud jerked off his coarse shoes, and in his stockinged feet proceeded cautiously through the open door of the kitchen and down the hall to the living-room where he had left his brother.

The door was still ajar. Bud paused outside. His fears had not been groundless. The volume of the history lay on the floor where Claude had dropped it in surprise at the import of its message. The brick had also been thrown to the floor, and Claude was just drawing his hand from the cache a-clutch of the package.

It should not be. Bud felt that he had the prior right to the legacy. He felt that Claude would have kept the whole thing had he found it first. A chair stood just behind Claude. Before Claude became aware of his return, he picked up the chair and brought it down full force on the latter's head.

There was a soft, sickening swish and a grunt, as Claude crumpled beneath the blow to the floor. The packet fell from his relaxing fingers, and would have been consumed in the blaze on the hearth had not Bud raked it hurriedly from the coals. He did not bother with removing the heavy band from the wrapping-paper in which the packet was encased, but thrust the packet in the bosom of his shirt.

Bud gave the prostrate victim one glance. He could not bear to look longer. It made him sick to look. There was a little trickle of blood running down the sloping hearth which disappeared in the ashes. That was all. He felt his victim's pulse. There was no beat discoverable. He pulled down the dirty green blind which half covered the crazy window-pane, and turned and walked swiftly toward the door.

Since the packet was the only thing in the dilapidated old house worth the taking, his preparations for leaving were soon made. They consisted in pulling on the shoes which he had left on the back porch. He looked at the holes and cracks of the old brogans with disgust. Tomorrow he would be shod as a man should.

He ran down the neglected driveway that led to the country road. As he stepped outside on the road he moderated his pace to a walk. No need to arouse the suspicions of the chance observer. And he reflected that he had all the time there was.

It was a half-mile to the nearest railroad station, a mere signal-stop. Bud turned and gave a last look at the old structure where he had dragged out a profitless existence for so many years. He was not sorry to see the last of it. He did not let himself think of Claude.

This was certainly Bud's lucky day for, as he approached the station he heard an approaching train whistle down-brakes. A woman was waiting for the train and it slowed down, saving Bud the inconvenience and possible danger of having to signal himself. He swung on the rear end of the train as it pulled out.

How good it was to be aboard and feel the distance constantly increasing between himself and the ghastly occupant and the little line of red running along the floor. He took a seat in the chair-car. He wished after he had sat down that he had gone to the smoker. A woman across the aisle was looking at him with an amused curl of the lip. Bud knew the reason. Part of his foot was visible through a hole in the miserable shoe. He stuck his foot out of sight under the edge of the car-seat. He pulled down his coat-sleeves so as to cover his grimy hands.

A few more hours, and he need not be ashamed to appear before the best of them. He glanced out of the open window at nearest him at the orange trees. He filled his lungs with the grateful aroma from their blossoms and settled back with a sigh of content.

"Tickets!" said the conductor, at his side.

"What will the fare to Los Angeles be?" Bud asked.

He wished he had taken the bills out before the conductor had aproached. He wished that he did not have to pull even one of the bills on the conductor, because he had an idea that they were of a large denomination. He had no other change

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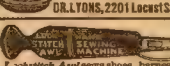

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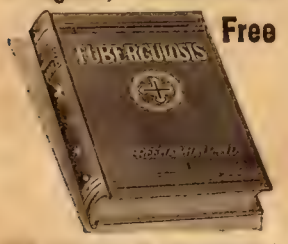

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whatever. Perhaps he could detach one of the bills from the packet. It would not do for a dirty outcast such as he to pull the entire roll. He must use caution.

"A dollar and seventy cents," the conductor responded to his inquiry.

"A dollar and seventy cents," Bud repeated, thrusting his hand into his bosom.

"Yes, yes, hurry up," urged the conductor.

Bud fumbled with the wrapper. It certainly was on tight.

He ran his finger down one edge of the packet and into a pin with which part of his clothing was hitched together. He jerked out his hand with a muffled exclamation and then tried it again. This time he got hold of one of the bills. He handed it to the conductor.

"Take the fare out of that, you suspicious guy!" Bud said.

The conductor looked at the bill, then threw it back to him with a laugh.

"That doesn't go here," he said.

Bud looked at the returned bill, and then in a frenzy tore the others from their hiding-place and glanced at them. They were for a hundred dollars apiece. There could be no question as to the genuineness of the issue the only drawback from which they suffered was that they were made payable by the Confederate States of America.

"Any other kind of money?" the conductor asked.

Bud shook his head. The conductor signaled the train to stop and Bud got off. He halted for a moment only, and then started wearily in the direction of the Holmes place. He didn't have the least idea of any place else to go.

His dream was ended. He felt that it was just that his disappointment should have come as it had. He could never have been happy anywhere with that memory of Claude's lifeblood trickling down the sloping hearth into the ashes. Now he could make reparation.

He would make reparation. He would fix up Claude's remains so they didn't look quite so ghastly, and then he would walk to the county-seat and give himself up to Justice.

As Bud crawled through the bars and passed down the lane that led to the old house, he remembered the first time he and Claude had gone down the same lane together. They were children then, and the two-story house, not yet falling into disrepair, had looked like a palace to them.

Tears came into Bud's eyes as he remembered. He stepped up on the back porch. "If I hadn't been so excited I wouldn't have done it," he said, as he nerved himself to go inside.

The water-bucket was in its usual place on the porch and full of water. How could that be? he wondered. He opened the door. There was a smell of frying bacon in the air. Bud started back in amazement. Claude was bending over the stove. His head had a bandage around it. Claude turned.

"Hello, Bud!" he said. "Where you been?"

"But your head?" Bud said in astonishment, and with a great sigh of relief.

"I guess I must have got a lightning shock and a fall," Claude explained.

"Thank God!" Bud cried.

'What for, the fall?'

'No," said Bud, "that you wasn't no worse hurt."

"Oh, a fellow ain't likely to hurt himself much in a little tumble like that, though I do feel queer and sore. But what about Grandpa's money?"

"Nothin' to it, Confederate money." Bud handed the loose bills disgustedly to Claude who threw them in the wood-box.

"Well," Claude said, with a sigh "we never was cut out for luck nohow," and he resumed the turning of the slices of bacon.

"Claude," Bud said, and his voice was full of feeling as he spoke, "I feel like you and I were two of the luckiest guys in the world."

Claude laughed. Sometimes Bud said things that he, Claude, did not understand very well. He supposed he got them out of books. A fellow that read books was likely to do anything.

⁂

A Rebuke.

Down in Fowler, Kan., some nights ago an evangelist who was conducting meetings became very much exasperated by reason of folks coming in late and because the congregation turned around to look whenever there was a new advent. On this special night a man came in late and every one turned and stared.

He brought it down full force.

Then the evangelist told a story: "A few years ago I was out on the prairies riding a bronco, and as I passed a prairie dog's den I saw the funniest-looking thing with such big, starry eyes that I got down to investigate. I began walking around that hole, and as I walked that owl's eyes kept fixed on me, but his body remained stationary. I just kept on walking, the eyes kept fixed and the body remained stationary, until, would you believe it, after I had walked around three or four times that owl's head dropped off.

"Some of these nights," the prophet moralized, "You folks will be looking under the seats for your heads."

⁂

Better Than Stilettos.

Italian—"What-ta you do in New York-a when you love a woman who have-a husband?"

New Yorker—"Wait till he gets run over; then help the widow collect the accident insurance, and marry her."

⁂

Had Been There.

"Ever surrounded by wolves?"

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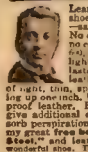

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Who Was The Traitor.

(Continued from page six.)

Wesley to get out of sight. Failing to locate him, Saywood entered his own quarters, wondering what was next to occur out of the ordinary. Being confident that Wesley was not under the influence of liquor, he was equally sure that something worse was back of the trouble.

"Confound it!" he muttered, "what this post needs more than anything else is an iron hand. Captain Relford has grown lax in discipline, and his understrappers have taken toe bit in their teeth. They require taming."

He was further considering this point when footsteps were followed by the appearance of Metterson. That gentleman nodded amicably.

"Back from Sunset Valley, and loaded with Nat Brief items," he abruptly announced. "Let me get them off my mind. First of all, I did not need to ask him who the dead mail-carrier was. He already knew. His name was Clarke. He has been a carrier in the West for ten years, and for two years has had the section between Porterhouse and Rhyne Valley for his beat. That's a ride of three hundred miles, they tell me. Rather a long ramble."

"Was he regularly employed?"

"All the time, and his beat was a hard one. The moment he finished at either end he had to start back. Busy man, Clarke was."

"Then he could hardly have been in this section long at a time."

"Only as he passed by."

Saywood fell silent. This seemed to dispose of his one-time idea that it was the carrier to whom Estelle referred when she told of a man recently shot to death, and her acquaintance with him.

"Next," pursued Metterson, "as to those who chased the carrier. Nat Brief swears that he has recognized Gustavus Elderley as the man who led the gang and talked with us at the campfire. I've passed that along to you before. But Nat says he can swear to the identity of more of the men, and I have their names on this slip of paper."

He handed it over, but the Lieutenant hardly glanced at it.

"All ranchers?" he asked.

"Yes. Now, here is the main point. Nat had learned, so he says, that Clarke stopped for supper, the night before his death, at Jared Simpson's ranch. After he went on there was some talk scurrying in the Valley, and Simpson rode and rallied the ranchers. They followed the carrier in a body, all armed. Later yet, shooting in the hills was heard back in the Valley, and—that's all Nat has thus far learned, though we all are aware what really happened."

"Nat has done well," remarked Saywood, absently.

"He said, 'Tell Boy Saywood that it's about all over. Elderley is the leader of the gang, and he can safely be marked down as Claggitt.'"

Saywood idly drummed upon the table, his expression gloomy. Time was when the tidings would have sent his blood to the gallop and he would have been eager to press on and wholly unmask the gang that had done so much ill about Fort Despair, but his zeal was now clogged and stagnant. He remembered Estelle and her prayer that he would not try to solve the mystery. The plea of a woman and his military duty stood opposed to each other.

"In conclusion," said Metterson, "Nat does not know just how much more to do at his end of the investigation line, for some move on his part may warn the desperadoes, so he wants clear information from you. 'Tell Boy Saywood,' Nat directed, 'that I want to know what he is going to do.'"

The Lieutenant drew himself erect with a sudden move.

"Tell Nat Brief," he replied, incisively, "that I am going to make instant war upon the gang, and clear away the last of its mystery."

Something in the tone made Metterson look very hard, but he remembered that he was a layman in the case and merely nodded. He had given the message, and others could do the rest.

Saywood soon cast off his outward depression, and he and his guest smoked on the upper piazza until they had their fill. After that the Englishman went to bed. The master of the house presently passed along to his room. From the shelf in the closet he took certain papers and spread them out before him. He examined them, his expression thoughtful.

"Number one!" he mused. "Letter of warning tossed into my window when I was in the town of Cutlip. Written by a woman, it cautioned me that if I came to Fort Despair I would be killed. I wonder who wrote it?"

He put the letter by slowly.

"Number two," he went on. "Charts made by me in the hills. Mere lines of topographical feetues—ridges, canyons, cliffs and the like. Why in the world should anybody wish to steal that trash?"

The were other papers, less important, but he forgot them and fell into deep thought.

"If we admit that Nat Brief is right, and that Gustavus Elderley is the leader of the marauders, it is, nevertheless, clear that more than one at the garrison is in the game. Estelle has told her story. Still, there are men here, too. Wesley surely is guilty, and how about Morcrats? Is the fact that Corporal Sinnott was singularly present when so many calamities occurred anything but chance? He mechanically stirred the papers.

"If Captain Relford would give me a free hand I'd have Wesley under arrest and compel him to reveal his secrets. He is the man to speak——"

The Lieutenant abruptly came out of his reverie. Unusual sounds reached him, and he knew they came from the Commandant's house. Fresh trouble was afoot there. Fearing that Wesley had returned to renew his hostilities, he hurried to the window.

A raised shade in the Relford house gave him view of the room beyond, and a surprising scene was revealed to him. He saw Estelle, Zyra, and Captain Relford, and Estelle was on her knees before her father, her hands raised, her agitation practically beyond control. The Captain made a motion as if to force her away.

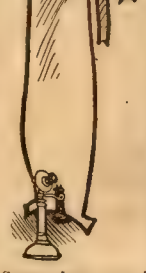
"He has discovered her connection with Claggitt!" thought Saywood startled.

Relford pushed past his daughter and started to leave the room. Estelle cried out feebly and fell prone upon the floor.

This powerful story will be concluded in the next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

BETTER THINGS IN SIGHT.



RANCES hurried to the telephone.

"Hello!" she said, brightly. But in a minute her voice broke. "No, you have the wrong number."

She put her pretty head on the telephone table and began to cry. "Oh, dear, oh, dear! It's always the wrong number. No one ever wants me. Oh, dear, I'm so miserable!"

When she had first looked cheerfully at the new white card by the telephone she did not know that the number would be of no consequence to a solitary soul in Chicago. Occasionally George, her young husband, would call her up from his office, but usually all day long Frances stayed in the apartment with a silent telephone. If it did ring it was somebody who had the wrong number.

So Frances cried. She cried because she was lonesome, for she knew no one in the big city. She cried because she was tired, homesick and miserable and because her sobs were company for her in a sad sort of way.

The first few weeks she had not cried. "Be busy and you will be happy," she would sing. The tiny flat glistened with cleanliness. She swept, dusted, polished and arranged with enthusiasm. George declared that he never had tasted such meals as she prepared. He complimented her excellent financial management. He took pride in the pretty dresses she wore in the evening and as often as he could afford it he took her to the theater.

After a while this did not satisfy her. She had reduced her housework and marketing to a system and it took very little time to keep the flat in order. George had seen her dresses again and again and good dinners were a matter of course. At first Frances tried extra housework as an antidote for loneliness, but after her violent scrubbing had taken the shine off the kitchen ware, after she had broken some vases by needless dusting and spilled the furniture polish on the rug she stopped. Her trousseau was still new and did not require the attention of sewing or shopping. On the few occasions she had left her neighborhood she had become lost. She had always lived in a small town and the noise of the city streets and the crowds in the stores confused her.

All her experiments had failed. So Frances cried. In the midst of her grief the door bell rang.

"A peddler," Frances said, dolefully. She wiped her eyes and opened the door. It was not a peddler, but a sweet young woman. She carried some letters.

"I am Mrs. Allen from across the hall," she said, timidly. "I brought up your mail."

Frances took the letters mechanically. Then she noticed that the powder was suspiciously thick around the eyes and nose of her visitor. Clearly Mrs. Allen had been crying, too. Impulsively Frances put out her hand.

"I wish you would come in," she said.

The two fear-stained young women sat down in the livingroom. "It was kind of you to bring the letters," Frances began.

"Oh, it's nothing," said Mrs. Allen. A pause. "I couldn't help seeing that one letter was addressed to Mrs. Frances Stevens West. I used to hear my cousin

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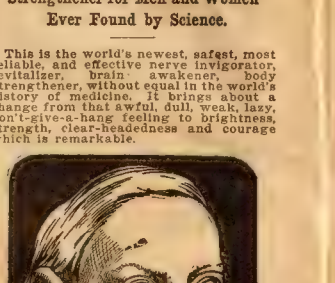

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Eula Thomas talk of a Frances Stevens of Plainfield."

"Oh!" cried Frances. "That's I. Is Eula your cousin? She is my best friend."

"I heard so much about you," declared Mrs. Allen. "I didn't know you lived in Chicago."

"I haven't very long," said Frances.

"Neither have I," said Mrs. Allen. "I don't know many people here."

"I don't know any," Frances replied.

"Neither do I," said Mrs. Allen.

"Do you enjoy the city?" Frances asked.

"Well," replied Mrs. Allen, "it has so many advantages. There are so many things to do and see. The theaters and concerts are fine. One does not waste time over social trivialities."

"Yes," said Frances. "And the modern conveniences simplify housekeeping so that there is time for the advantages. I—I like it."

"I don't," declared Mrs. Allen with decision.

"Neither do I," said Frances.

"You see," said Mrs. Allen, growing confidential, "I came from a small town where I knew everybody. I'm not used to the city and I don't know my way about. There is so little to do when my husband is away. Why, sometimes I have asked central to ring my telephone to know if it's in order"

"That's how it is with me," said Frances. "Don't you want to see my apartment?"

After the tour of inspection, in which Mrs. Allen had been properly enthusias-

"IT WAS KIND OF YOU."

tic, Frances said timidly: "I would be glad if you would stay to tea."

"I'd love to," she answered, "if you will let me bring over my fresh cake."

The tea party progressed famously. The brides forgot their tears and laid plans for shopping and matinees and promised to introduce their husbands. Mrs. Allen gave Frances the cake that was left and was presented in turn with a panful of new rolls. The two parted affectionately.

"I am so glad you came over, said Frances. "This is the first time I have had company."

"It is the first time I have been to a party," said Mrs. Allen.

In the hall they saw their husbands coming upstairs talking earnestly. The couples looked at one another in surprise.

"We didn't know you knew each other," said all four.

"We haven't very long," said the husbands.

"Neither have we," said the brides.

* * *

Economy in Epitaphs.

In a certain town of Nebraska lives a man who has been so unfortunate as to lose three wives, who were buried side by side. For a long time the economical Nebraskan deliberated as to whether he should erect a separate headstone for each, commemorating her virtues, but the expense deterred him. Finally a happy solution of the difficulty presented itself.

He had the Christian name of each engraved on a small stone—"Mary," "Elizabeth," "Matilda"—a hand cut on each stone pointing to a large stone in the center of the lot, and under each hand the words:

"For epitaph see large stone"

* * *

Mysteries of Figures.

"You will at least admit that two and two make four."

"Oh, yes," replied the high financier, "that is undoubtedly the case in rudimentary mathematics. But in business I have seen two and two put together in such a way as to make any number of millions."

HEARS CHURCH BELLS AFTER LONG DEAFNESS

For the first time in years, this good lady, who has been deaf, hears the church bells. She is in ecstacy. Only this morning has she been able to hear the prattle of her grandchildren and the voice of her daughter. Twenty-three years ago she first found herself becoming deaf, and, despite numerous remedies, medical advice, hearing devices and specialists' treatments, she found it more and more difficult to hear. Of late years she was harassed by peculiar noises in the head, which added to her misery. At last she was told of a book which explains how to regain perfect hearing without costly apparatus or drugs. She got this book and learned how to quickly become freed from deafness and head noises. Observe her delight in this hypothetical illustration! Any reader of The Saturday Blade who desires to obtain one of these books can do so free of cost by merely writing to the author, Dr. George E. Coutant, 6H, Station E, New York, N. Y. He will be pleased to mail it promptly, postpaid, to any one whose hearing is not good. This offer will bring joy to many homes.

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GENTLE JABS.

A flirt and her conscience are soon divorced.

And the louder a man talks the less it amounts to.

Theory alone never accomplished anything worth while.

Many a brave man has lost his nerve in a dentist's chair.

How narrow-minded most people are who argue with us!

The hot air treatment for financial ills is seldom a curative.

Some people lie because they are too polite to tell the truth.

Men who sow wild oats never complain if the crop is a failure.

There are a few things that even a young man doesn't know.

Riches do not make a man happy; it is what he gets out of them.

A man is always willing to pay what he owes—if it is a grudge.

An optimist is a man who knows that his troubles might be worse.

There are times when we should be thankful for what we fail to get.

A man isn't necessarily worthless because his neighbor is worth more.

The building of a spite fence is an insult your neighbor can't overlook.

And if some girls never married they would never get over being romantic.

When the average man's ship finally comes in the silent boatman is in charge.

Some men look for trouble so that they may be ready to dodge it when it comes.

You may become quite popular with some people by keeping out of their way.

A man can't sympathize with any one who has the toothache unless he has had it himself.

About the only way a man can convince his wife that her opinion is wrong is to agree with her.

If a bachelor wants to get married it is not necessary for him to hunt a wife; all he has to do is to stop dodging.

Nobody knows exactly what a political orator says but the reporters, and they would not if they weren't paid for knowing.

People are always complaining about their bad luck, but what would be the use of having bad luck if one couldn't use it as a complaint generator?

AVIATION.

I bought a thousand dollars' worth
Of gilt-edged stock
In airships, which above the earth
Were billed to flock.

A rise the agent prophesied
For that stock—more.
He used a phrase the deal supplied:
"Tis plain 'twill soar!"

Alas! alack! from time to time
I pause to swear,
Nor stocks nor ships went up, but I'm
Up in the air!

For Two Cents.

"Give me a ticket to Blankville," said the red-nosed man, at the ticket window, "and be mighty careful of your conduct. I see by the morning paper that the general manager of this bargain counter railway has handed down a ukase ordering all employes to be civil to patrons or lose their heads. It's about time, for there are more sleeky agents on this line than you could count in a thousand years. I'm glad to see that the general manager has come out of his trance at last. The next time I get any sass from a ticket agent I'll report him so quick his hat will fall off. Here's your dollar."

"The fare to Blankville is $1.02," said the agent, in a monotonous voice.

"It's nothing of the kind, doggone you," retorted the red-nosed man. "I bought tickets to Blankville before you were born. You're trying to get a rake-off of two cents, that's what's the matter with you. Maybe I won't report you to the general manager! Maybe he won't put the kibosh on you by wire! This old road has been in the hands of receivers three or four times, and will be in their hands again, just because skates like you are holding up the company every chance they get. Now, you get busy and hand me my ticket! Don't you see there are half a dozen people waiting their turn behind me?"

"The fare to Blankville——"

"You're going to spring that chestnut again, are you? You must be aching to lose your job. I've traveled on this road ever since they began to run the first train. They had an old sheet iron locomotive and they fed cordwood into it, as there was no coal around here in those days. Every once in a while the train would stop and the passengers had to get out and gather up chips and tear down fences until there was enough fuel to reach the next town. Now and then the locomotive would jump the track and we'd all have to get out and sweat around with crowbars and fence rails until we got it pried back again. Many a pair of suspenders I ruined lifting that old locomotive back on the rails, and what reward do I get? When I ask for a ticket to Blankville a sore-eyed agent tries to hold me up for two cents!

"Give some of the rest of us a chance to get our tickets," said the next man behind. "I believe the train's coming now."

"Let her come," exclaimed the red-nosed man. "Let her come and be hanged. I don't move out of my tracks until this young whipper snapper hands me a ticket to Blankville at the right price. No sway-backed station agent in the United States can hold me up for two cents. I don't care any more about two cents than the rest of the boys, but there's a principle in this thing, and men of my stamp bleed and die for principle. It was my grandfather who struck for his altars and his fires and inspired the poet."

"Why, there wouldn't have been any railway here if it hadn't been for me. The original promoters couldn't get a charter and they came to me and groveled around on their knees begging me to use my influence in their behalf and I went to the capital and pulled the wires so successfully that the road building began right away. And what is my reward? A splay-footed agent tries to touch me for two cents when I demand a ticket to Blankville!"

"Oh, jiminy blitzen!" cried the man behind. "I'll pay the extra two cents for you. Hurry and get your ticket!"

"I don't want your two cents," replied the red-nosed man. "I have two cents of my own, and would just as soon pay them over as not, but for the principle involved. You don't seem to get the right point of view. There are things more sacred than two cents. Men don't bleed and die on the battlefield for two cents. They bleed and die for——"

But the man behind proceeded to hostilities.

No Place for a Stammerer.

Tom McNeal tells of a Kansas man who stutters badly, who visited Chicago and got into the elevator of one of the skyscrapers. He worked his jaw frantically, but couldn't get the elevator boy to understand what floor he wanted until he had been carried up fourteen stories above where he wanted to go. Then he came down to the lower floor and started up again. After he had gone through this performance several times he stepped out in disgust and hunted up the agent who was directing the running of the elevators. "S-s-say," he stammered, "w-w-w-w-would y-you m-mind speakin' t-to th-that f-f-fel-ler in th-that cage? I w-a-wa-wa-ant t-to st-st-stop at the s-s-sixth f-floor, b-but b-before I can say s-s-say s-s-sixth h-he has me up t-to t-the t-t-twenty-s-seventh."

No Use for Books.

A book agent tells the following story:

"I approached a farmer in a poor community and began showing my book. He listened with interest, but when I had finished the first lap of my speech said that he couldn't read. Of course, that put new light on the matter, but I didn't give up, for we meet many customers who can't read. I told him of the great help it would be to his children and his wife, and he still was interested.

"I thought I was making progress, but I wasn't. I had finished my speech with the usual peroration that is designed to make the customer enthusiastic and make him sign for the book—a thing few will do without considerable persuasion. Instead of taking the pencil, he said:

"'It's a good book, all right, and all that, but I can't read. My daughter she can read, but she has a book.'"

Free Asthma and Hay Fever Cure.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 116 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for asthma and hay fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a bottle by express to any one who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very, small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS—Make $2.00 each selling our wonderful Luminous Crucifixes; nothing to sell six a day; absolutely new; shine all night in darkest room. Pioneer Portrait Co., 1258 West 63rd street, Chicago.

STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box 80

AGENTS Repeater, costs 5c, sells 50c to $1.00. Sample free. Thornber Laboratory, Ferris, Ill.

FREE—"Investing For Profit" Magazine. Send me your name and I will mail you this magazine absolutely free. Before you invest a dollar anywhere get this magazine—it is worth $10 a copy to any man who intends to invest $3 or more per month. Tells you how $1,000 can grow to $25,000—how to judge different classes of investments, the real earning power of your money. This magazine six months free, if you write today. H. L. Barber, Publisher, 453, 28 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

AGENTS—Don't you know a fine line of new household articles pay best and sell easiest, samples free and catalogue. Chabot Mfg. Co., Providence, R. I.

MAKE money selling the Matchless Pocket Lighter, Handiest thing imaginable. Every smoker buys. Sample 50c. Agents and dealers wanted. Texas Novelty Co., Houston, Texas.

$25 weekly taking orders for cutrate groceries. Outfit free. Progressive Table Supply Co., Toledo, Ohio.

START a mail order business, or manage an agency for me, printed matter furnished for half the profits. Write for particulars. Hazen A. Horton, Desk 701, Tekonsha, Mich.

WANTED Agents to sell rich looking imported $6x68 rugs. $1 each. R. H. Carson, Milan, Tenn., sold $15 in four days. His profit $51. You can do as well. Write for sample offer and unique selling plan. Exclusive territory. Condon, Importer, Stoningtom, Maine.

$250.00 paid for distributing 2,000 free packages Perfumed Soap Powder in your town. Men or women. No money required. B. W. Ward & Co., 1770 Berteau ave., Chicago.

HELP WANTED

WANTED—Active man in each locality. $50 to $150 a month. Introduce us to your friends. No experience needed. Spare time. Sick, accident and death benefits. Free—Insurance and Cash-Bonus offer sent first applicant from each place. Write the I-L-U 939, Covington, Ky.

WANTED—A man or woman to earn $6 to $15 per day. All or spare time, nothing to sell. Send stamp for particulars. M.S.L.A., Indianapolis, Ind.

$400 monthly for you. I made $105 first week. Experience or capital unnecessary. Plans free. Shirley, Gobleville, Mich.

GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write for Booklet B. Patterson Civil Service School. Rochester, N. Y.

LEARN the Barber Trade. Few weeks completes. We control many excellent positions. Tools given. Branches in all leading cities. For information regarding any one, write Dept. 10, Moler College, 738 South Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill.

FREE Illustrated Book tells about over 360,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet, A 1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

TYPEWRITERS

Typewriters—All makes, $10 up. Free trial. Guaranteed two years. Express prepaid. Francke Payne Company, Rosedale Station, Kansas City, Kansas.

VIOLINS

STRADIVARIUS Violin for sale cheap. Excellent sweet toned. Miss Bertha Mardisee, Route 5, Rosedale, Kansas.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MAKE a comfortable living at home sewing plain seams. Any ordinary sewing machine. All home work. No canvassing. Steady. Sewers wanted in each town. No triflers reply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage, samples, etc. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers Sewing, "BL" Dept., Rehoboth, Delaware

YOU can write a short story. Beginners learn thoroughly under our perfect method. We help those who want to sell their stories. Write for particulars. School of Short-Story Writing, 77 Page Bldg., Chicago.

FARMS FOR SALE

FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, B. C., 88 acres, sub-divided into 2 4-acre tracts, 11 of 5-acres and one of 25 acres. The 25-acre tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, ice-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane. Pure spring water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois.

MUSICAL

WELL-KNOWN composer wants Song-poems, at once. Chance for successful writers to make a fortune. All poems available will be returned promptly. Len E. Fleming, Suite 201, 1416 Broadway, New York City.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

DRINK HABIT—Guaranteed home treatment three days—lifelong result. The only reliable. Book mailed free. Edw. J. Woods, 534 Sixth avenue, M 356, New York, N. Y.

MISCELLANEOUS

BARGAIN—Three fine neckties $1. Gold-plated Pin free. Ties and pin retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

PERSONAL

MARRY: Catalogue with photos and descriptions Free. Pay if suited. Select Club, Dept. 674, Tekonsha, Mich.

MARRY—Many rich, congenial and anxious for companionship. Interesting particulars and photo Free. The Messenger, Sta. D, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY, thousands wealthy, anxious for early marriage, descriptions free. Confidential. 268 Market st., San Francisco, Calif.

LOVINE never fails. Every package guaranteed. Either sex 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100N, Palatine, Illinois.

MARRY—Book of descriptions and photos mailed sealed, FREE. The Exchange, Box 525 B, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry; free. U. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

MARRIAGE Paper Free; best published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial paper of highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of marriageable people with means; mailed free, sealed; either sex. Write. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRIAGE paper; highest character; incorporated; 16th year; 8,000 members; paper sealed; send 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1,600, Denver, Colo.

INTERESTING Books and Den Photos; 50 photos, 10c. Cat. free. Bond Pub. Co., C 2, Columbus, Ohio.

MARRY wealth and beauty. Marriage Directory Free. Pay when married. New plan. Ladies send description in first letter. Box 314 A., Kansas City, Mo.

Hissed Too Soon.

An "Uncle Tom's Cabin" company was starting to parade in a small New England town when a big gander, from a farmyard near at hand, waddled to the middle of the street and began to hiss.

One of the double-in-brass actors turned toward the fowl and exclaimed:

"Don't be so dern quick to jump at conclusions. Wait till you see the show."

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A Kansas City Man Has Published a Book, Giving the Formula By Which the Whiskey Trust Makes Their $5 Per Gallon Whiskey For Only 12c. Per Gallon.

Fights the Whiskey Trust By Mailing His Book Containing Formula Free to Every One.

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Mr. Marcel is mailing out thousands of these books exposing the secrets of the whiskey trust on account of the trust's fight against him. Any one interested should write for the book, as it will be sent free.

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Send No Money

Two to Three Years to Pay

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You can use it in any way, enjoy this sweet-toned instrument to the fullest extent, play on it, test it in every way you want. If, at the end of thirty days you decide it is the piano for your home, you can pay for it on the easiest, fairest payment terms ever devised—JUST $1.50 A WEEK, if you so desire.

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ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Points of Resemblance.

A woman entered Cossit Library the other day and solicited the assistance of a lean desk clerk.

"I'm searching for a book called 'The Dentists' Infirmary,'" she said. "The president of our literary club told me to get it."

"'The Dentists' Infirmary?'" repeated the clerk, with a rising inflection, vainly trying to associate such a book with a study class.

"Yes," replied the woman. "It's all about devils and angels and such like."

The light of understanding dawned on the puzzled face of the clerk.

"Oh, you mean 'Dante's Inferno.'"

Wanted a Bible.

Housekeeper—"Now, you clear out right square off, or I'll call the hired man."

Tramp—"Please, mum, I only wanted to borry a Bible, if you have one to spare."

"Bibles? I've got about forty."

"Well, mum, will ye please lend me one a few minutes? I want to read about Belshazzar's feast. Mebbe it will stay my appetite till I git to some town where people has fewer Bibles an' more pies."

A Lamentable Failure.

McLester (sadly)—"The new figure I invented for the german failed last night."

Friend—"What was it?"

McLester—"I arranged a set of beautifully decorated flowerpots at one end of the room, each with the name of a gentleman, and then the ladies were to get partners by throwing a golden heart into the flowerpots."

Friend—"Why didn't it work?"

McLester—"They smashed all the windows and didn't hit a flowerpot."

In a Bad Box.

Friend—"That typewritten letter I received from you was abominably printed—just full of blunders."

Business Man (sadly)—"I know."

"Why don't you discharge the fellow?"

"It's a girl."

"Well, discharge the girl."

"Never; I'm in love with her."

"Then marry her."

"She won't have me."

A Healthy Place.

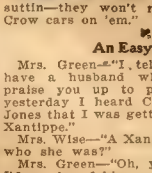
Mr. Gotham—"What has become of the De Styles?"

Mrs. Gotham—"I met Mrs. De Style on the street yesterday. She said Mr. De Style's health had been so much improved by the ocean air that they had concluded to remain in their seaside cottage all winter.

Mr. Gotham—"Hum! Just as I thought. Got caught in that wheat flurry."

An Anecdote, Sad and Funny.

Sandy Hoyle, negro janitor of the Advocate, listened to a discussion by the foreman and the intelligent compositor on the commercial possibilities of the aeroplane. Sandy seemed deeply interested, but at the close of the conversation he shook his head solemnly and said:



"White folks may do great things with them flying machines, but one thing I knows fo' suttin—they won't never need no Jim Crow cars on 'em."

An Easy Mark.

Mrs. Green—"I tell you it's nice to have a husband who isn't afraid to praise you up to people. Why, only yesterday I heard Charley telling Mrs. Jones that I was getting to be a regular Xantippe."

Mrs. Wise—"A Xantippe! Do you know who she was?"

Mrs. Green—"Oh, yes; I told Charley I'd overheard him and he explained that Xantippe was the goddess of youth and beauty."

Origin of Hay Fever

Mrs. Hayseed—"The Weekly Gleaner says a doctor says that goldenrod causes hay fever."

Mr. Hayseed (thoughtfully)—"It may be. Only city folks get hay fever, and the angels knows no one but city folks is fools enough to be snuffin' around them yeller weeds."

An Economical View.

Minks—"Hello! I thought you'd gone to Dakota."

Winks—"Changed my mind."

Minks—"But you said you wanted to get a divorce, because your wife make things so hot for you you couldn't live with her."

Winks—"I've concluded to keep her until that tarnal coal combine busts."

"Dry" Humor.

With a slightly puzzled expression the mistress of the house listened to the resonant street cry: "Rags and bottles! Rags and bottles!"

"Why, do you suppose," she said to her husband, "do they put those words together?"

"Because," he replied, "wherever you find bottles you find rags."

In the Vernacular.

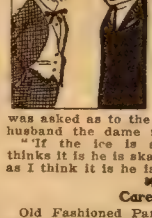
"My watch has stopped and I can't make it go," said the woman just in from her auto, laying the timepiece on the counter.

"What seems to be wrong?" asked the watchmaker, taking it up.

"I'm sure I don't know," said the owner, "but it won't spark."

A Difference of Opinion.

A friend once asked "Uncle Joe" Cannon for information as to the prospects of a politician who was at that time generally thought to be "on the ragged edge."



"He seems to think he's getting on all right," said Uncle Joe, "but others entertain a decidedly different opinion. His situation brings to mind the story of the old lady up in Maine. When she was asked as to the whereabouts of her husband the dame replied:

"If the ice is as thick as Henry thinks it is he is skating; if it is as thin as I think it is he is swimming."

Careful.

Old Fashioned Party (with old fashioned prejudices)—"Ah, very clever, I dare say. But I see it's written by a lady, and I want a book that my daughters may read. Give me something else."

A Flesh Reducer.

Stout Lady—"Does a bicycle reduce the flesh?"

Mr. Slimpurse (wearily)—"If you buy it on the installment plan it does."

$8 to $10 a Day and a fine TAILORED SUIT FREE

To wear good clothes—to have plenty of coin—to be prosperous and look it—to have a business standing in the town. That's the ambition—the dream of every young man—your dream! We make it come true! We give you a free suit—a free chance at the big money—a free right to be stylishly dressed.

How? Just by being our agent. Just by showing your friends the swellest samples—the snappiest styles—the daintiest values at lowest prices ever heard of. Big outfit and finest cloth samples free. You don't work for the orders you just take it. Suits to order $8 and up.

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No matter what you are doing, or what other line you now have, we want to send you swell suit pattern and have you tailored to your own measurements—and *specially finished* to make your friends and others *order quick*.

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WORTH $12 The newest style in Zybeline Cloaks at about one-third what retail dealers will ask you for them late in the season. Besides ourselves, only the large city stores will be able to show you these new style garments. The material is a regular cloak fabric of excellent quality which closely resembles the finest camel's hair cloth, only it is much heavier, more durable, and warmer, and will be first choice of those who want advanced styles.

This Cloak is a regular $12 retail value, and we will sell the first factory shipment of 2,500 to readers of this paper, at only $5.98, to introduce. At this favorable price you will save for yourself about $6.00. We want you to order this splendid garment strictly on its merits. Note that the cloak is sensible in cut, as well as stylish. The body is **genuine Zybeline cloth,** it has a fancy gray chinchilla collar, trimmed with navy blue appliqué, stitched with white silk. The back of the coat has the new straight line effect. The sleeves are latest set-in style, and the front is the stylish, round cut-away. Facing of the material extends full length of the garment. Without question, the warmest, coziest and most stylish cloak for the money ever offered at anything like this price. We say this without fear of any contradiction.

We Guarantee Every Cloak to Suit. Our special introductory price for this exclusive garment, in genuine Zybeline, is only $5.98. In two colors: Navy or Oxford Grey—state choice. Sizes: 32 to 42 bust. Order No. G711.

CHASE'S PONY SKIN Or CARACUL Cloth COAT $4.95

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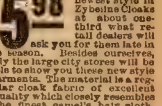

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We furnish a complete agents' outfit, consisting of large sample book (not a folder), order blanks, tape measures, advertising matter—in fact everything essential to the conducting of a high-class tailoring business.

Write today for this big outfit It is sent express prepaid. Drop a postal and say "*Send me your agents' outfit.*" We will start you at once on the road to Success. Be sure and write today.

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Family size. Beautifully decorated with PINK ROSES & GOLD. Grandest offer ever made. Thousands of sets sent out & everybody delighted. That's our record, let us prove it to you. Sell only 12 boxes of our Cathartic Remedy at 25 cts. a box. We send it by mail. It sells like hot cakes. Then send us the $3.00 & our handsome 51 piece dinner or tea set is yours FREE. Not even freight charges from your pocket. You will get a BETTER SET than you expected. Satisfaction guaranteed.

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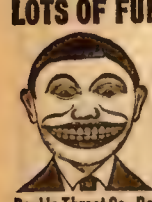
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Our Boys' Corner

Boy Scout Adventures

Or, Lost in the Everglades

By St. George Rathborne

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CHAPTER III.
MAROONED.

THE Southern boy was thrilled by what his chum said.

"Let's get busy right away, then. We've got an anchor aboard: what's to hinder our dropping it overboard here and now?" he cried, struggling out of his nest of blankets.

"Just what I was going to propose, returned Amos, glad to see that the other took such a sensible view of the matter.

After some little trouble, and several scares, as the boat tipped under the blasts of wind that struck her broadside-on, they managed to unfasten the cover forward, and push the anchor through the gap.

"A deer, shoot you'silly!"

Immediately the boat came around, presenting her bow to the storm. After that the rocking motion gave way to a bobbing one; but they could stand that, since the grave danger had been averted.

"Ugh! talk about cold, this beats all creation!" chattered Dolph, as he once again crawled under his blankets.

Amos struck a match.

"It's nearly three o'clock!" he announced.

"Thank goodness for that. The day will come the sooner. Why, we must have been asleep a long time," declared the one among the blankets, as best he could, despite his chattering teeth.

"Yes, and can afford to keep awake the balance of the night, I guess," said Amos.

"Look here, you don't think anything could happen to us out here, do you?" demanded his cousin, suspiciously.

"Oh! hardly; but all the same I don't intend to drop off again. I ought to have gone ashore and overhauled that painter. It was sure loose after all," grumbled Amos, snuggling down beside his chum, because the air was nipping, with that fierce wind finding all sorts of little ways for entering the cover.

"How far do you reckon we drifted before you woke up, Amos?"

"Don't know. Seems like I was dead for sleep. May have been knocking along for plumb an hour or more when that big splurge sent me against the side, and made me sit up and take notice," came the reply.

"Whew! if that is so, then we must have traveled miles and miles," remarked the other lad.

"Wouldn't be surprised one little bit," replied phlegmatic Amos.

"Then we've lost our tight little island!" lamented Dolph.

"Shucks! we only borrowed that, you know. My friend, the ten-foot 'gator, has first claim on that hump of soil. Forget it, Dolph, and go to sleep. I'll keep watch, and wake you up if anything happens."

"For goodness' sake be careful how you do it then. I'm going all to pieces with such sudden shocks," grumbled his chum.

"Aw! forget it. We're getting off better than we deserve, I'm thinking," and Amos settled himself as comfortably as he could, sitting with the blankets tucked around him, and the wobbling canvas tarpaulin from time to time ducking down to strike his head smartly.

Time passed drearily. Now and then Dolph would change h's position, with perhaps a sigh; but while he evidently must be awake, he made no attempt to enter into any conversation. From time to time the watcher would lift the cover near him, and take an observation. The wild scene appeared to have a mysterious fascination for Amos; since his soul was always wrapped in admiration for any of Nature's upheavals.

Finally, he seemed to be looking longer than usual, a fact his comrade must have noticed, for Dolph spoke.

"Daylight coming along, ain't it, Amos?"

"Yes, the night is gone, thank goodness," returned the sentinel.

"And the pesky old norther?"

"Is still booming away at the old stand," laughed Amos.

"What you going to do?" demand his companion, as he saw the other crawling out of his nest with an air of business about him.

"Me for that jolly little Jewel stove. It spells warmth and breakfast, if so be we can only coax it to be good, and burn on such a rickety foundation as this jumping boat."

With this Amos started hustling around. His cousin lay still, for several reasons. In the first place he was feeling fairly comfortable where he was, and

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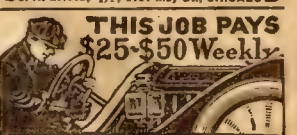
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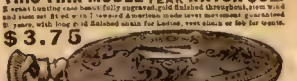
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did not fancy a change for the worse. Then, again, with that low cover over their heads there was not room for both of them to be on the move at the same time. He heard Amos shoving things aside to get a solid place to set the little box that held the German oil gas-stove, which had been such a boon to him on many previous occasions. Then came a buzzing sound, which he knew indicated that the clever little contraption was getting under way.

"It's a go, I reckon?" said Dolph, presently.

"Sure. Never failed me yet, and worth its weight in gold at such a time as this. Think of having a fine hot cup of coffee soon! How does that strike you, eh, boy?"

Dolph made a sound that indicated the idea was very pleasant to him.

"My! but don't she pitch and toss though? Makes me think of a horse I used to ride. But that good old tarpaulin keeps the wet out, all right. Whatever would we have done without it, Amos?"

"Oh! I wouldn't have come without some sort of covering. We couldn't just carry a tent; and besides, we didn't expect to get ashore many times on this cruise. Now for the coffee. Can you reach the mess chest, Dolph?"

After that the other had to come out of his nest; but already the buzzing oil stove, that was converting its liquid fuel into blue flame gas, had made the cramped space under the tarpaulin more comfortable; so Dolph resigned himself to the inevitable, and tried to assist in getting the coffee going. Ten minutes later, and they were indulging in a hot drink, with the evaporated cream can handy, to mellow the amber contents of their cups.

Later on, when daylight had come in earnest, Amos climbed out on the stern of the little power-boat to take an observation.

"Somehow things look different to me," remarked Dolph, as he thrust his head forth close by, to survey the scene.

"Well, they are different. Notice that back of us it's like a big sea, with only a patch of grass here and there. I tell you we were blown miles away, and to the south of Alligator Island. Look how the waves grow bigger and bigger as they sweep across that stretch. I can't even see the other side up here," ventured Amos, as he strained his eyes looking off to leeward.

"Say, maybe it's Lake Okeechobee!" exclaimed Dolph.

The one at the lookout laughed aloud. "You know better than that, Dolph. Whw + Because in the first place this water is all shallow, and the lake they say is deep. Then again, as we were already below the big lake, and the wind sent us further south, how under the sun could we run across Okeechobee, tell me that?"

"But anyhow, Amos, it's mighty fine you woke up when you did. What if we had been carried halfway across this open stretch? Why, we'd have capsized as sure as anything. I reckon we're lucky, after all."

"That's my way of thinking," replied the other, balancing himself so that the constant wild plunging of the boat would not send him overboard.

"Don't suppose you could get a peep of our—that is, Alligator Island?" continued Dolph.

"Nary a peep. There's a heap more grass to windward, though. How we ever pushed through that without getting caught beats me. But this is too raw up here. All we can do is to take things easy, and wait till the norther blows itself out."

The day passed very tediously. Dolph complained every little while. Now it was because they were losing so much time; then again he wondered whether they might not find themselves at sea in that wilderness of water and sawgrass; so that it would be weeks before they found a vent; and finally his cramped position began to get upon his nerves.

Amos, more philosophical, said little. About noon he proceeded to do what cooking was possible. Variety did not enter into their calculations just then. All they yearned after seemed to be something warm. So the balance of the beans, being placed over the renewed fire in the little Barthel stove, they speedily disposed of this. Then followed some soup, an afterthought of Dolph's, but acceptable for all that; and finally the steaming cup of fragrant Java.

Again, as night drew near, they managed to get another warm feed. By this time even the skeptical Dolph was ready to fall down and worship the little stove in this emergency had proven such a jewel indeed.

"Get one as soon as I reach home, and every fellow in the Swamp Fox Patrol will follow suit when they see what it can do in a pinch," he declared enthusiastically, as they sat there and munched their supper.

"Perhaps you notice that the wind is going down a lot with the setting sun," remarked Amos, the observing one.

"Well, now, I hadn't paid any particular notice to it; but since you draw my attention to it, I see that's a fact. Perhaps tomorrow we may pull out of this, eh?" replied Dolph, eagerly.

"Sure. The norther turned out to be a short one, after all. By morning these waves will have gone to sleep, and we can take up that delightful rowing again."

Dolph groaned, and then grinned.

"Well, even that will be better than staying here, cramped up in a knot. Hang it! How will I ever get all these measly kinks out again?" and he stretched himself after the manner of a dog rising out of long slumber.

The night seemed unusually long as Amos. Times without number he would awaken, possibly because of his cramped quarters, and the lack of exercise to make him sleep well. On such occasions he often took an observation, to find the weather still very cold, though the wind had gone down to a mere steady blow, and that was hourly diminishing.

When day came they first of all had some breakfast. Then the tarpaulin was folded up and stowed away; after which the boys bent to the work of propelling the heavy boat along by means of the oars.

Since they had lost all track of their present situation, the best they could do was to keep heading into the west; though Amos remembered to favor a course leaning a trifle toward the northwest, when occasion permitted.

"Say, if only we had a sail, we might make some use of this dying breeze," said Dolph, who was resting and beginning to wipe his brow.

"Bright thought, old fellow! What's to hinder our having one, tell me? Here's the canvas right handy; and these two long oars ought to be useful in a pinch to serve as the mast. I must have been asleep not to think of that. Here, let's get busy, and save our backs," declared his chum.

When there was a will there proved to be a way. In a short time they had managed to rig up a rude sail, which, despite its clumsy appearance, seemed to be effective in catching the wind.

"We lose more or less leeway, because we have no centerboard, you see," observed Dolph, who was considerable of a sailor; "but all the same we're just scooting through the water, and heading somewhere!"

"Yes," returned Amos, shrugging his shoulders; "if only we knew just where, it might relieve our minds more or less."

"To hear you talk a fellow would be tempted to believe we were lost!" observed the other, eyeing his comrade suspiciously.

"Well," chuckled Amos, "I wouldn't be surprised if that did cover our condition right now. Chart we have none; and every way we look the same boundless sea of grass is the only prospect that meets our eyes. Yes, I guess you would be right in saying that the Vixen and her crew are adrift in the Everglades, without any idea of direction, save that east lies the Atlantic, and to the west under the setting sun can be found the Gulf. If we ever manage to reach it; but Dolph, make up your mind that we don't intend to stay lost any longer than we can help it."

CHAPTER IV.

A WARM WELCOME ASHORE.

"Where's your wind now, Amos?"

About an hour had passed since they set the sail and found that it drew so well. The Michigan Boy Scout laughed.

"Petered out completely, it seems," he remarked; "but we'd better leave the sail up in case the new wind when it starts, is favorable. If anything it's going to come out of the east; because it seldom backs from north to west again."

"But we made some miles, I reckon, and perhaps in the right direction."

Dolph drew himself up alongside the apology for a mast to make a survey, while his chum once more bent down to

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monkey with the stubborn engine. If he could only coax that to start up again, all their troubles must speedily vanish, just as the morning mist does before the sun.

"I wish you'd take a look," remarked Dolph, presently.

"Why, what is the matter? Think you see our old friend, Alligator Hangout, again?" demanded the engineer, coming into evidence.

"No, but there's something else far ahead. Looks to me like real land!" replied Dolph, with suppressed eagerness.

The Northern lad took one good look. He happened to possess better eyes than the doctor's son, and immediately exclaimed:

"That's what it is, as sure as you live, Dolph. We're just going to head that way, and pull for all that's out. If the wind comes up, all the better; but no matter, it will please me to sleep ashore tonight, if possible."

"Oh! joy! Those cramps will be the death of me if we keep on this way. Seems like I couldn't get rested, curled up like a cat on a hearth. I need a chance to jump around, and fling my arms. Grab an oar, then, and here's seeing you," with which he started to move the ashen blade in the water.

They pulled like heroes good and strong. Even when noon came Dolph begrudged the time spent in getting some lunch ready. When he managed to set his mind on a certain subject he went into it heart and soul.

But Amos Amos who dallied now, much to the surprise of his chum.

"What ails you? Are you sick?" demanded Dolph, when, having picked up his oar again, he waited five minutes in vain for the other to come to time.

Amos seemed to be enjoying himself, stretched out on the blankets.

"Yes, that's what. Truth to tell I'm thinking of coaxing a substitute to take my place. I'm no Roman galley slave, I tell you!" he observed, with the most complacent air imaginable.

His cousin stared at him as though utterly unable to comprehend what new whim had struck Amos. Then, seeing the other turn his eyes off toward the east, he followed suit, immediately to give a joyous whoop.

"The breeze! the bully old breeze! Thrice welcome, old chap! Let's get up the sail again in a hurry, Amos!" he exclaimed.

The surface of the water away off toward the east was dark with the newborn air currents, which must soon reach them. And as it came from just the right direction to help them out of their predicament, they felt that they had a reason for exhibiting satisfaction.

Soon they were gliding pleasantly along, westward bound. The merry gurgle under the bow was certainly sweet music to the ears of those tired lads. Dolph handled the wheel, and managed to avoid contact with such bunches of tall grass as lay in their course. An hour later and there could be no doubt about the nature of the line along the horizon. It was land, and seemed to run for quite some distance north and south.

"Can that be the border of the Everglades?" demanded Dolph, who knew that his mate had studied the condition of things more carefully than himself, asking hundreds of questions of those who knew from personal experience what this inland grassy sea was.

"I can't believe it," returned Amos, with a negative shake of his head; "fact is, we must be somewhere about the middle of the big patch."

"But that's sure land ahead, ain't it?" asked Dolph, growing alarmed.

"I guess it is, all right. One man told me there was a ridge right in the heart of the Everglades. He called it the backbone of the peninsula. And if what he said is true, then that must be it," remarked the pilot of the expedition, soberly.

"But how can we ever get the boat across?"

"Don't have to, when we can go around. One minute you're wading over the fact that you haven't got any solid ground to do your exercising on; and then the next thing you complain because there's too much land. I guess we'll just have to take things as we find 'em, anyway, Dolph."

"That's right, and you won't hear me complaining again in a hurry. Land in any shape or size will just about fill the bill with me," declared Dolph, realizing the inconsistency of his actions.

Three o'clock came along. The breeze still held good, and by this time both boys were feeling rested. They sat there, faces turned toward the land that now stood up plainly for miles in front of them, and about another hour's journey away, for they were not making very fast time, it must be remembered.

"Just like we were a shipwrecked crew, which we are, sure pop, waiting to be cast on the desert island," declared Amos, with one of his cheerful grins.

"Say, you don't suppose now, that there can be any Indians in this beastly place, who hold a grudge against whites, do you—some of those old Seminoles who hid away at the time the balance of the tribe was taken across the Mississippi?"

Dolph was really in dead earnest when he asked this. He even looked anxiously toward his Marlin rifle that hung under one of the side seats of the power-boat, as though he had half a notion to draw it out so as to be ready. Amos knew what this meant, for he had seen his cousin eagerly cramming all the facts connected with the Seminole War, from a history at home, so that he might know something about the country and its people.

Those few tame Indians whom they had met with around Miami had not impressed him seriously; but then vague stories had drifted to the ears of Dolph in connection with several camps of Seminoles hidden deep in the heart of these Everglades; and who were said to hate the whites, and still persist in keeping a number of negro slaves captive.

"Nothing to it," jeered Amos, who himself had taken very little stock in these stories. "What I'm thinking about is a chance right now of doing a little hunting on this ridge. There must be squirrels, and perhaps deer. Who knows but what we might even scare up a black bear!"

"Glory! that would be just the limit," exclaimed the Carolina boy; "for you see, I've never had the luck to run across a real live bear out in the woods. But if we do, I reckon this little tool is good for bear steaks. All you have to do is to aim straight, and pull the trigger; she does the rest!"

He could resist no longer, but drawing the gun out began caressing it after the fashion of a hunter who loves his weapon, upon the reliability of which he is often compelled to stake his own life.

That next hour proved very tedious to both boys. As the sun sank lower in the western heavens the breeze began to slowly die out; and they feared that it would not last. But, after all, this alarm was groundless, for finally the boat was steered up against the bank. Dolph made a wild leap ashore, and immediately came near falling backward into the water.

"Great governor! a water moccasin curled up there asleep, and I came within a foot of jumping on him!" he exclaimed, turning a pale face toward his chum.

Then Amos saw him throw his gun forward and glance along the barrel. With the sharp report something began to whirl around at a great rate.

"Look out!" bellowed Amos, in great excitement, "water moccasin be hanged! That's a full-fledged Florida diamond-back rattle, don't you know?"

"So I see now; but he's a goner all the same, for I nearly cut his old head off with that bullet," replied Dolph.

"Look there! what's that moving back of those bushes?"

Dolph whirled around, filled with a new dread; for his recent adventure had apparently quite thrilled him.

"A deer! Shoot, you silly! Hit him! There goes our venison supper!"

Dolph could just catch a glimpse of something russet brown in color that was spinning away as if on the wings of the wind. Deer or calf, it was all the same to him. He managed to get his gun to his shoulder and pull the trigger; but he had forgotten to draw the hammer back after shooting the diamondback. To remedy this error took valuable seconds, so that when he finally managed to let loose, the fleeing animal had gained such a distance that of course the bullet never touched him. They saw him vanish among the brush.

"And a noble little buck, too," groaned Dolph. "Just think how fine a venison steak would taste, and after a fellow had shot the deer too. I feel like kicking myself, that's what."

"Please don't go to the trouble; I'm perfectly willing to do the job for you," remarked his cousin, blandly.

"Anyhow," declared Dolph, trying to get some consolation out of the affair; "it's taught me a lesson, and after this no matter what I fire at I'm going to get my gun ready instantly to shoot again. Why, I had a dead bead on him, when I found the hammer wasn't raised, or the old shell thrown out. Bah! if a fellow's foresight was only as good as his hindsight what a bully good thing it would be."

"Another thing," said Amos, seriously, "it pays to look before you leap, down in this country. Just think what would have happened if you had landed on that ugly monster. He'd have punctured you before you could say excuse me; and just as like as not you'd have been a goner, in spite of all that snake bite medicine I got from that cracker. Now, lend a hand here, and we'll tote the boat."

Despite his bitter disappointment at not getting the deer that seemed to have almost begged to be taken in out of the cold, Dolph soon grew fairly jovial again. It was indeed a great pleasure to set his feet once more on solid ground, and be able to jump about as much as he wished.

A fire was started, and camp made.

"Don't we sleep ashore tonight for a change?" asked Dolph, as they started in to prepare supper.

"Might as well as not," returned his comrade. "But see here, suppose you look after these things while I take a little run along the shore, to see if I can pick up anything worth having in the way of game."

"Better carry my rifle instead of the scattergun; no telling what you might see. Perhaps that deer came back to get a look at us, you know; or there might be a mate to it hanging around. Venison! um! wouldn't that make your mouth water, after four days without fresh meat!" and Dolph smacked his lips at the thought.

Apparently Amos thought his suggestion a good one, for he picked up the repeating Marlin, leaving his double-barrel resting against the tree.

There was half an hour of daylight yet, and at any rate he would enjoy the walk. As to losing his bearings, why the thought never once occurred to him;

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for since Dolph would keep the fire going, he must always have a beacon that would tell him just where the camp was located.

Dolph busied himself with the supper. He was fast picking up many new ideas in this line, from his more experienced partner, and when allowed to take hold showed considerable interest in the task. Time went by unheeded. Then suddenly he realized that it was pitch dark, and that although supper was all ready, his cousin had failed to return.

"And I don't remember hearing him shoot either; that's mighty queer," Dolph muttered to himself, as he left the fire, and stood there, trying to peer back of the curtain of darkness that night had brought in its train.

And as he stood there he was conscious of a sudden feeling of apprehension that he could not understand; but it was as if a cold hand had pressed down on his head.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

WE'LL SEE.

When we would beg for childish joys,
For schemes enchanting sigh,
There always was a certain phrase
That made our hopes beat high.
She made no promise, gave no hint,
Yet we were filled with glee;
More than we dreamed would come to pass
When mother said, "We'll see."

So has it held through older years
As it was proved before:
So may it hold of other worlds
Beyond this mundane shore.
She gives no promise, makes no hint,
Yet bliss will surely be,
More than we dream may come to pass,
For mother says, "We'll see."

* * *

Mrs. Riggs—"I should think a pig like that razorback one would need watching. It looks villainous."

Mrs. Briggs—"Oh, Ephraim is all right. He's one of the safety razorback breed."

* * *

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"So far as I can see," he said, "that $300 you spent on Ethel's dramatic education has been practically thrown away."

"Oh, no, it hasn't," returned the husband mildly. "Her stage experience has taught her to dress in a hurry. Nowadays, when I ask her to go any place with me, she can change her clothes in ten minutes. It used to take her over an hour."

* * *

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"Well——" began the flagman.

"Don't you know it's a State's prison offense to stop a train without cause?" the conductor explained. "Why, we're twenty minutes late now."

"That's just it," was the answer. "Where have you been the last twenty minutes?"

* * *

Sounded the Same.

The teacher, after having taken great trouble to explain the difference in the meanings of the words, "dream" and "reverie" addressed the class: "Now, could any of you give me a sentence with the word 'reverie' in it?" A small youth put up his hand. "You, John!" she uttered, in astonishment. "Well, what is it?" "Please, ma'am," said the urchin, "the 'reverie' blew his wus'le with the word 'reverie' in it?" A small youth put up his hand. "You, John!" she uttered, in astonishment. "Well, what is it?" "Please, ma'am," said the urchin, "the 'reverie' blew his wus'le and stopped the game."

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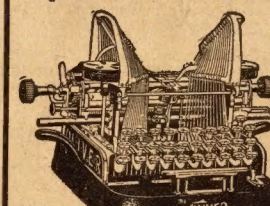

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If you keep it you pay only $5 down—and the typewriter will earn its own way thereafter. You stop paying in 10 months and the total cost is only $55, which is $45 less than the catalog price, with no interest to pay and with no collectors to bother you.

If you own a typewriter now you can trade it in to us as a first payment. We will be liberal with you.

This is absolutely the best typewriter value ever offered to the public and the selling plan is the most convenient ever devised. Fill in the coupon with your name and address, and we will immediately send you the particulars of this offer, together with a detailed description of this splendid typewriter. This will cost you nothing and you will be under no obligation. We only want to be sure that you act at once, for the supply of these machines is limited.

TYPEWRITERS DISTRIBUTING SYNDICATE
166 U L, No. Mich. Blvd., Chicago. (114)

Typewriters Distributing Syndicate
166 U L
No. Mich. Blvd., Chicago

You may send, without placing me under any obligation, further information of your typewriter offer.

Name .....
Address .....
My old machine is a ..... No. .....

BOYS!

Earn $1.00 to $5.00 a Week selling the BLADE and LEDGER. These are the two greatest papers published and people in every town want to have some one they can buy them from each week. We give you two cents out of each nickle you take in. You don't send us any money until you sell the papers. You sell the papers on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. It is easy to sell them and get steady customers. You can send for as many as you can't sell, and we won't charge you for them. You can't LOSE. Be one of the boys who make steady money each week, and OWN A PAPER ROUTE OF YOUR OWN. Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit and a letter telling you just how to sell the papers and what to say. We tell you exactly how to get customers. It is easy. GET THE JOB BEFORE SOME OTHER BOY BEATS YOU!

.....Fill this out and send it to us today.....

W. D. BOYCE CO.
600 Dearborn Ave.
Chicago, Ill. Ad 2.
I want to sell the BLADE and LEDGER. Please send me.....papers.

NAME.....
Street or R. F. D. No.....
Age..... Town.....
State.....

SPEAR Will Trust You Wherever You Live—Write For His Free Catalog

A Personal Word

The rich and prosperous class can always command the luxuries of life, but the average home lover needs the Spear System of Credit to the Nation. I want 1,000,000 families to say of me: "He helped us to furnish and beautify our homes." I ask for no higher tribute to my life's work.

Write for my Free Catalog today.

SPEAR of Pittsburgh

To the Home Lovers of America

Spear of Pittsburgh wants to prove to you, no matter where you live, the wonderful advantages of beautifying your home on his Long Time, Open Account, Easy Credit System. Hundreds of Thousands of Home Lovers from Maine to California now buy their Home Furnishings from the House of Spear. These regular Customers tell their friends and neighbors about **Spear's** High Quality, Low Prices and Wonderfully Liberal Terms, and that is the real reason why **Spear** has built up the Greatest Home Furnishing Business in the World.

But there are still some people—you may be one of them—who do not send to **Spear** of Pittsburgh for their household needs! Many, no doubt, hesitate because they think he is too far away. But this is not true, as you will see, when you understand how simple and easy it is to trade with **Spear,** selecting your goods from his Mammoth Bargain Catalog right in your own home. Wherever you live—North, South, East or West—**Spear** invites you to enjoy all the benefits of the **Spear Credit System.** His catalog contains everything for the home.

Spear Shows Pictures of Everything

It is so easy to trade with **Spear!** Just drop him a postal or mail the Coupon for the Big Spear Catalog. It comes right back in a hurry—Free to you—filled from cover to cover with an amazing array of wonderful bargains for your home—a vastly greater selection than you could probably get in the combined stocks of 100 average furniture stores. **Spear** shows you his wonderful assortment of Carpets, Rugs and Draperies in the colors, patterns and designs from photographs of the original goods. Just sit down quietly at home with your family at your side, if you choose, and select anything you want from this great Exposition of Household Bargains, including everything in

Furniture, Carpets, Rugs, Stoves, Ranges, Refrigerators, Clocks, Dishes, Sewing Machines, Washing Machines, Lace Curtains, Portieres, Mattresses, Bedding, Springs, Silverware, Go-Carts.

Thousands of Spear Bargains

The **Spear System of Home Shopping** is the simplest, most enjoyable, satisfactory and economical way ever invented. **Spear's** Bargain Book shows splendid big pictures—actual likenesses of everything! You don't need to guess—there right before your eyes as plain as day, you can see every article you need for the home, with exact, complete and truthful descriptions that leave nothing to be desired. With the **Spear Catalog** before you, all sense of distance is lost—you feel that you are just as close to the **House of Spear,** as if you were actually to walk into his Mammoth Institution at Pittsburgh.

Spear Word Is Backed By $1,000,000

Remember, **Spear** must live up to every promise! You get it all in "black and white", before goods are shipped, and then if everything is not exactly as **Spear** says, you can return any article at his expense and get your money back. Can you do this with a store? **Spear's** guarantee of satisfaction is good, because it is backed by over $1,000,000 in cash assets and his reputation for fair and square dealing.

Your Credit Is Good With Spear

Spear Says, "Select what you need—pay when you like." Why deny yourself a beautiful home, furnished with every comfort, when the **Spear** System of Credit Shopping makes it so easy for you to have what you like and pay when most convenient?

Use your credit with **Spear.** No matter where you live, his liberal, open account, easy payment plan gives you every possible credit advantage enjoyed by the most favored and well-to-do customer of any city store. **Spear** trusts all honest people, everywhere, regardless of their income. He charges nothing extra for **Spear** credit, either—not a penny—so don't hesitate—just select what you want from the Mammoth **Spear** Bargain Book, paying for it as you please, without interest, and in small payments as convenient.

Spear Prices Are Lowest of Any

While **Spear's** credit terms are the most liberal in the country, yet his prices are the lowest. This is because **Spear** buys goods in such vast quantities that he secures better prices than would be possible to smaller concerns. By extending his business to hundreds of thousands of customers all over the country, he can afford to accept just one small added profit from each sale.

Spear of Pittsburgh allows no store or factory on earth to undersell him.

Those who take advantage of the **Spear** System of Credit Buying not only get the benefit of highest quality but also make an actual saving of from one-third to one-half on every order. That is why **Spear's** Business is growing by such wonderful leaps and bounds.

Spear Says—30 Days to Decide

Spear of Pittsburgh will ship anything you select from his wonderful Bargain Catalog on approval. You can keep the goods for a 30 day's home test. Then, if after a whole month you are not fully satisfied, return the goods at **Spear's** expense, and he will refund your money. You see **Spear's** idea is that his home furnishings must sell themselves to you after you have tried them for 30 days. Isn't that about the fairest way in the world to sell goods?

Send Spear YOUR Order Now

You needn't wait for **Spear's** Catalog. If you want a Rug, Set of Dishes, Go-Cart, Rocker or any of the articles shown on this page, just send **Spear** a trial order right now, and let him prove to you once and for all that no other concern in the country can possibly give you the wonderful values that he can. You have already heard of **Spear,** even though you have never yet done any shopping with him.

Big Rocker Bargain

Order No. C. W. 531— Price $4.95— 75c Cash, Balance 50c Monthly

A large, roomy, comfortable, solid oak Rocker with high, wide back, fully tufted and buttoned. Seat is large and roomy, upholstered with high grade black Sylvan leather over full steel springs and beautiful ruffled edge to match back. Construction is solid golden oak throughout, with high gloss golden finish. Wide arms, front posts of handsome design.

A beautiful, high color Brussels Rug, red rose design, with either green or tan ground. Guaranteed full 9-wire Tapestry Brussels with wool facing. This is the greatest genuine Brussels Rug value you ever saw. It is perfectly safe to order direct from this ad as we positively will refund your money if on receipt you are not perfectly satisfied. Mail the Coupon below today with $1.65 cash.

No. C. W. 4602—Size 9x12—Price $11.95— Balance 75c per Month

Spear's Library Table

No. C. W. 3774 Price $6.95—$1.50 Cash—75c a Month

This handsome, Colonial Design Library Table is guaranteed to please you or money back. Large, heavy 22 x 45 inches made of American quartered oak, fitted with drawer. Highly glossed finish. A splendid ornament.

No. C. W. 201— Price $11.65— $1.50 Cash, Balance 75c Month

This Handsome complete Metal Bed Outfit, consisting of heavy, perfectly constructed Iron Bed, any color, 4 feet 6 inches wide, a good woven wire spring with coil supports; 50-pound cotton top mattress 2 pillows.

Big Stove Bargain

Order No. C-2708— Price $29.95—$4.50 Cash —Balance $2 Per Month.

$4.50 puts this magnificent Base Burner in your home. One of the biggest stove bargains we have ever offered. Stands 60 inches high; burns hard coal; self-feeding, double heating, built with a return flue. Beautifully trimmed with heavy silver nickle of exquisite design. It gives ½ more heat with ¼ less fuel. Tea Kettle attachment for heating water. Pipe Collar connecting double heating flue with up-stairs room. Perfect in every way.

Spear's 55-Piece Dinner Set

No. C-2930—Price $5.65, 75c Cash, 50c Month

The high quality, exquisite shape, dainty art decorations and low price of this magnificent Dinner Set have made it one of our most popular offerings. Decorations are in pure gold in continuous border effect, wonderfully pleasing and effective. This set is made in our West Virginia Pottery, which is conceded to be the largest, most modern in the world.

"Steinway Special" Sewing Machine

Guaranteed 10 Years — Price $18.65

Fitted with a High Arm Improved Drop Head, Ball Bearing Iron Stand, Beautifully Carved Quartered Oak Case, highly glossed. Automatic Lift Head—Dust Proof Case. Full equipment of steel attachments and accessories. This High-Class Steinway Special Sewing Machine is guaranteed perfect in material, workmanship and operation. 30 Days' Free Trial.

No. C.W. 2710— $2 Cash $1.20 Month

Wonderful Unifold Davenport

No. C-1521—Price (Including Mattress) $26.55, $4.50 Cash, $2.00 Per Month

Beyond question the greatest Bed Davenport ever offered by anyone at the price. Two useful articles in one—a full size, comfortable bed and a beautiful, luxurious davenport. Of solid quartered, golden finished oak or northern birch, mahogany finished. Upholstered over full steel coil springs in our celebrated imperial leather. A truly wonderful bargain! Money back if not absolutely satisfactory on a 30 days' free trial.

Spear's Famous New 'Special Plymouth' Range

No. C2601—Price 19.95, Without Reservoir No. C2606—Price $23.95, With Reservoir Cash $3.00—$1.50 Per Month

This is the great range that has caused such a sensation as the most amazing bargain ever offered. Easily worth $35. Yet our price is only $23.95 (without reservoir $19.95).

It is a masterpiece in construction. Every feature is complete and perfect. Oven is of same proportions and construction features found in very high-cost priced ranges. A very small deposit sets this famous bargain in your kitchen for free 30 days test. If it don't give absolute service we refund your money.

How To Use Spear Coupons

Remember, it will be perfectly safe for you to order any article shown above direct from this announcement, as you have the privilege of returning the goods at any time within 30 days, and your money will be refunded if everything is not perfectly satisfactory. If you wish to order right now, without waiting for Spear's Mammoth Bargain Catalog, just fill out carefully and mail the Order Coupon on left, with remittance for first cash payment by Draft, Money Order or Registered Currency. If you do not wish to order now, but simply want Catalog only, mail Coupon on right.

Spear & Company
Dept. T4
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Mail Your Order On This Coupon

SPEAR & CO., Dept. T4, Pittsburgh, Pa.

I enclose herewith $.....to apply as first payment on.....
(Give Name and No. of Article)

I agree to pay balance of $.....at rate of $..... per month. It is understood that I am to have the privilege of returning the goods at any time within 30 days from date of shipment and you agree to refund the money paid and also freight charges both ways if I am not perfectly satisfied with them.

NAME .....

ADDRESS.....

Mail This Coupon For Catalog

SPEAR & CO., Dept. T4, Pittsburgh, Pa.

I have read about the Wonderful Spear Bargains in Home Furnishings, and I would like to know all about the Spear Open Account, Easy Payment Plan. Please send me your Mammoth Free Catalog, Prices, Terms, etc., without the slightest obligation on my part.

NAME .....

ADDRESS.....